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BY
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James = = Revelation

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THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

The Epistle of James

Introduction

The Epistles of James, First and Second Peter, the three Epistles of John and the Epistle of Jude constitute the so-called Catholic, or General Epistles. They were thus named in earliest days, and in the ancient manuscripts these seven Epistles are grouped together as we have them in our English version; however, they always follow the Book of Acts. It is claimed that they were named General Epistles because Christians in general are addressed in them, which does not hold good with the second and third Epistles of John, for these were addressed to individuals. The first Epistle in this group, following the Book of Acts in the manuscripts, is the Epistle of James.

Its Peculiar Character

That there is a great difference between the great Pauline Epistles and the Epistle of James is seen at a glance. If one reads even the Epistle to the Hebrews, addressed to the same class of people, believing Hebrews, to whom the Epistle of James is also addressed, and reads James immediately after, a great and notable change is seen at once. The character of the Epistle of James is essentially *Jewish*. In the second chapter the word synagogue is used as the place of their assembly, "If there come unto your *synagogue* a man, etc." They were then still in the synagogue. Nothing about the church, the body of Christ is mentioned in this Epistle, nor do we find here the great doctrines of Christianity and the corresponding Christian relationship. The law is also prominent; and there are other Jewish features which will be pointed out in the annotations. The character of the entire Epistle corresponds with those to whom the Epistle was originally addressed "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad." It is evidently a document

written at an early date during the transition period and before the great doctrinal Epistles of the Apostle to the Gentiles had been produced, in which the fulness of redemption, the body of Christ, the church, and its unity and other cardinal doctrines of our faith are revealed.

What do we mean by *"transition period"?* That the beginning of Christianity had a decidedly Jewish cast is known to all Bible students. For years all the believers were Jews. There was a great Jewish-Christian assembly in Jerusalem and many more throughout Judea. As we learn from the Book of Acts there were many thousands of Jews who believed, but who were also zealous for the law; they still made use of the temple worship, went there at the accustomed hours of prayer. There were also many priests who at one time were obedient to the faith, believed that the Crucified One was the Messiah; they also continued undoubtedly in their priestly ministrations in the temple. They still had their great national hope of a restoration of the kingdom. That hope indeed was preached by Peter in Acts iii:19-20.

That the Epistle of James is put in all the ancient manuscripts next to the Book of Acts is therefore of significance. We breathe in this Epistle the same Jewish-Christian atmosphere which we find in the beginning of the Book of Acts.

James, the Author of the Epistle

What we have stated above identifies the author of this Epistle. Who is James (Greek: *Jacobos*—Jacob)? Certainly not James, the Apostle, the son of Zebedee. He was martyred in the year 44, as recorded in Acts xii:2. Nor can the author be James, the son of Alphaeus, another Apostle. His name is mentioned for the last time in the New Testament in Acts i:13. We hear nothing more about him, and it is inconceivable that he should have held a position of authority which belongs to the author of this Epistle. There is another James, who is designated as "the brother of the Lord." He has been generally accepted, even by critics, as the author of the Epistle.

The Apostle Paul speaks of him in Gal. i:19. Three years after his conversion he returned to Jerusalem to interview Peter, and Paul adds, "but of the other Apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother."

James, the brother of the Lord, belongs to those mentioned in John vii:5: "For neither did His brethren believe in Him." James and his brethren did not believe on Jesus, the Virgin-born Son of God, as the Messiah. But in the first chapter of Acts we find mentioned among those who waited in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father "Mary, the mother of Jesus, and His brethren." They had been converted and were now believers. How were they convinced that Jesus was the Christ? There can be no question that the James mentioned, distinct from the Apostles, in 1 Cor. xv:7, to whom the risen Christ appeared, is the brother of the Lord. He saw the Lord risen from the dead; He had appeared to him and that became the great turning point in his life and he and his brethren believed.

He early held in Jerusalem the position as leader. When Peter had been miraculously led forth from prison and appeared in the midst of a company of believers, he said, "Go show these things unto James and to the brethren" (Acts xii:17). He was the acknowledged head of the Jewish-Christians in Jerusalem. He is the spokesman in the first council held in Jerusalem, in the language of our day "the presiding officer" (Acts xv:13). Through him the Holy Spirit gave a very important revelation. Years later when Paul undertook the fateful journey to Jerusalem and had reached the city, he called on James, and after salutation reported to him "what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry." And James spoke the fatal words which enticed the Apostle Paul to conform to the keeping of the law, when James told him, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous for the law" (Acts xxi:19-26).

According to ancient sources, like Eusebius, James was a godly man and a strong observer of the ceremonial law, and, though he was ready to see the hand of God in the

ministry of Paul and Barnabas among the Gentiles (confirmed by the second chapter of Galatians), he adhered closely to the law and the Judaistic form of Christianity to the end of his life. Dr. Schaff* remarks, "Had not a Peter and above all Paul arisen, Christianity would perhaps never have completely emancipated from the veil of Judaism and asserted its own independence. Still, there was a necessity for the ministry of James. If any could win over the ancient covenant people it was he. It pleased God to set so high an example of Old Testament piety in its purest form among the Jews, to make conversions to the Gospel, even at the eleventh hour (preceding the destruction of Jerusalem), as easy as possible for them. But when they would not listen to the voice of this last messenger of peace, then was the measure of divine patience exhausted, and the fearful and long-threatened judgment broke forth. And thus the mission of James, the brother of the Lord was fulfilled. According to Hegesippus James died a year before the destruction of Jerusalem." The Jewish historian Josephus records this in the following paragraph: "Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but on the road, so he assembled the Sanhedrim or judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others. And when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned."†

For various reasons this Epistle was, even among the church fathers, treated with suspicion. It seems that the uncertainty as to the writer, and that it was addressed entirely to Jewish believers, raised these doubts. These doubts were revived during the Reformation and Luther especially called it "an Epistle of straw," meaning by it that it did not contain the wheat.

"On the whole, on any intelligent principles of canonical reception of early writings, we cannot refuse the Epistle a

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*Dr. P. Schaff-Kirchengeschichtc.

†Josephus Book XX.

place in the canon. That that place was given it from the first in some parts of the church; that, in spite of many adverse circumstances, it gradually won that place in other parts; that when thoroughly considered, it is so consistent with and worthy of his character and standing whose name it bears; that it is marked off by so strong a line of distinction from the writings and Epistles which have not attained a place in the canon; all these are considerations which, though they do not in this, any more than in other cases, amount to demonstration, yet furnish when combined a proof hardly to be resisted, that the place where we do now find it in the New Testament canon is that which it ought to have, and which God in His providence has guided His church to assign to it."*

When Was It Written

James lived and labored in Jerusalem. There is no likelihood that he ever left the city of his fathers, hence we cannot doubt that the Epistle was written by him in Jerusalem and sent forth from there. As to the exact date scholars have been divided on that. That it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and not after, is obvious, for James died before the city was taken by the Romans. But does not the Epistle of James refer to Paul's teachings in Romans as to righteousness by faith, and therefore, it is argued, James must have written the Epistle after Romans, and perhaps also Hebrews, had been written. But the argument is weak. James did not answer Paul's teaching at all; he was guided by the Spirit of God to emphasize a holy life, as a justification of real faith before man. That he cites Abraham, as Paul did in Romans, is no evidence that he had the Epistle to the Romans in his possession. "It is much more probable, that all which James saith respecting works and faith has respect to a former and different state and period of the controversy, when the Jewish Pharisaic

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*Dean Alford Prolegomena.

notions (as to the boast in the law) were being carried into the adopted belief in Christianity, and the danger was not, as afterwards, of a Jewish law-righteousness being set up, antagonistic to the righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ, but of a Jewish reliance on exclusive purity of faith superseding the necessity of a holy life, which is inseparably bound up with any worthy holding of the Christian faith." Some of the most painstaking scholars, like Drs. Neander and Schaff have assigned to the Epistle a very early date. The absence of any mention of the decision at the church council (Acts xv) in the Epistle strengthens the early date. The date must be put around the year 45 A. D. and this makes the Epistle perhaps the earliest of the New Testament writings. Why should it not be so, considering that the Judaistic church in Jerusalem was the beginning of Christianity and the message of the Epistle harmonizes so fully with the character of that church?

The Twelve Tribes Scattered Abroad.

As already stated James addressed the Epistle "to the twelve tribes scattered abroad." We hear much in our days about "the ten lost tribes." But were they lost when James wrote his Epistle? If they were lost how could he have addressed this Epistle to them? But furthermore he addresses also those among the twelve tribes who were believers, so that it is but logical to assume that the twelve tribes, perhaps remnants of them, were known in the days of James, and that a number of each of the tribes had accepted Christ, the Messiah. Of course, like so much else, the term "twelve tribes" has been spiritualized as if it meant "the real Israel of God," that is, all believers, Jews and Gentiles. But this cannot be done. The fact that the literal tribes of Israel are addressed has been recognized by most expositors. James as the head of the Jerusalem church came in touch with many Israelites, who, according to their age-long custom, came up to Jerusalem to the feasts. Perhaps many of these visitors becoming acquainted with James

and their believing brethren were also convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah and believed on Him. They went back to their different communities in Central Asia and beyond, in the dispersion, and formed their synagogues. Later James learned from them the spiritual conditions in these different centers in the dispersion and addressed this Epistle to them as well as to those who were not believers.

We must also remember that a similar Jewish-Christian remnant will be in existence once more in Palestine during the coming great tribulation; it is the godly remnant, which we have pointed out many times in the prophetic Books and in the Psalms. Then the Gospel of the Kingdom will again be preached, and as it was in the Jewish beginning of the age, signs and miracles will follow, in healing (James v:14) and otherwise. The Epistle of James will then have a special meaning for this remnant.

Is the Epistle of James for us?

The Jewish character of this Epistle has lead some to say "It is for the Jews and not for us." We have known believers who refuse to read this Epistle. But that is a serious and deplorable mistake. Here are written great and needed truths which are as needful for us as they were for those to whom the Epistle was originally addressed. The Christian who passes by the Epistle of James rejects a most important part of the Word of God and as a result he will suffer loss. We quote from another: "I am persuaded that no man, I will not say despises, but even attempts to dispense with the Epistle of James except to his own exceeding loss. Luther would have been none the worse, but all the stronger, for a real understanding of this writing of James. He needed it in many ways; and so do we. It is, therefore, a miserable cheat that any should allow their own subjective thoughts to govern them in giving up this or any portion of the Word of God; for all have an important place, each for its own object. Is it too much to ask that a document be judged by its express and manifest design? Surely

we are not to take Paul's object in order to interpret James. What can be conceived more contrary, I will not say to reverence for what claims to be inspired, but even to all sense and discrimination, than such a thought? And it is thus that men have stumbled and fallen over this—it is little to say—precious and profitable, and above all, practically profitable position of the Word of God.

"At the same time we must read it as it is, or rather as God wrote it; and God has addressed it, beyond controversy, not merely to Christian Jews, nor even to Jews, but to the twelve tribes that were scattered abroad. Thus it embraces such of them as were Christians; and it gives a very true and just place to those who had the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. Only it is a mistake to suppose that it contemplates nobody else. People may come to it with the thought that all the Epistles were addressed to Christians, but this is simply wrong. If you bring this or any other preconception to the Word of God, no wonder His Word leaves you outside its divine and holy scope. For He is ever above us, and infinitely wise. Our business is to gather what He has to teach us. No wonder, therefore, when persons approach the Scripture with preconceived thoughts, hoping to find confirmation there instead of gathering God's mind from what He has revealed—no wonder that they find disappointment. The mischief is in themselves and not in the divine Word. Let us prayerfully seek to avoid the snare."*

The exhortations in this Epistle are, therefore, of great value; and there are many precious gems to be found scattered throughout the Epistle of James, the brother of the Lord.

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*William Kelly.

The Divisions of the Epistle of James

We have already pointed out that this Epistle is not a doctrinal document. Addressed as it is to the twelve tribes in the dispersion it has nothing to say about Gentile believers, nor about their place in the church, the body of Christ. They were believers, yet distinctly Jewish believers. This is seen in the opening verse in which James calls himself "the servant of God," an Old Testament expression; but he adds "of the Lord Jesus Christ." He and those to whom he wrote were serving God, still zealous for the law, adhering to it in every way, yet they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and served Him. Their national hope as the people of God was theirs still. The Epistle is taken up entirely with the difficulties these Jewish believers had; it refers to the trials (like Peter's first Epistle) they were undergoing, exhorts them to faith. It points out their serious errors in their lives as believers; while they believed their lives did not correspond with such a belief. The correction of the faults, while common to all believers, has a striking Jewish aspect. They had respect of persons, looked to outward circumstances, and they are reminded of the royal law of the Scriptures, and insistence is made that their faith in the Messiah must be evidenced by works. They are exhorted to be more than mere hearers of the Word, by which they had been begotten anew, but to be doers of it. Many of them evidently wanted to be teachers, had great ambitions, but their Jewish character, looseness of their tongues in speaking evil, had become prominent and that is corrected. There is a repeated reference in the Epistle to the godly of their nation, to Abraham and Isaac, to Rahab, Job and Elijah. There is also quite a little which links with the Sermon on the Mount. Finally there are exhorta-

tions to godliness, prayer, the life of trust and a reminder of the Coming of the Lord. The prominent word seems to be the word "patience." We find it five times. The trying of faith is to work patience (i:3); patience is to have her perfect work (i:4); they are to be patient unto the coming of the Lord (v:7); and be like the husbandman who waits in patience, and finally they are reminded of the patience of Job. The exhortations may be grouped around this word patience. I. Exhortations to Patience in Suffering God's Will (i:1-18). II. Exhortation to Patience in Doing God's Will (i:19; iv:17). III. Exhortation to Patience in Awaiting God's Will (v:1-20). We shall follow in our analysis and annotations the chapter division as we have them in our Bibles.

I. **TRIALS AND THE EXERCISE OF FAITH.** Chapter I.

II. **THE ROYAL LAW: FAITH AND WORKS.** Chapter II.

III. **THE EVILS OF THE TONGUE CORRECTED.** Chapter III.

IV. **FURTHER EXHORTATIONS TO RIGHT LIVING.** Chapter IV.

V. **THE COMING OF THE LORD AND THE LIFE OF FAITH.** Chapter V.

Analysis and Annotations

I. TRIALS AND THE EXERCISE OF FAITH

CHAPTER I.

1. Trials and the Power of Faith. 1-4.
2. The Resources of Faith. 5-8.
3. The Realization of Faith. 9-11.
4. The Conquest of Faith. 12-15.
5. The Result of Faith. 16-27.

I. Trials and the Power of Faith: Verses 1-4. The first verse is the introduction. The writer is James, but he does not add, as he might have done, "the brother of the Lord." It would have identified his person at once, and being the Lord's brother, he had a perfect right to call himself thus. But he did not. His humility shines forth in this omission; others called him by that title, but he avoided it. He is "servant of God," and he served God as "servant of the Lord Jesus Christ," a godly believing Jew. He writes to the twelve tribes in the dispersion of like faith. But the beautiful words of greeting in other Epistles "Grace and peace be unto you," are not used by him. Greetings only are sent, and in this respect it is like the Apostolic document which was issued by the council in Jerusalem in Acts xv (see Acts xv:23).

The practical character of his letter is at once apparent. "Count it all joy when you fall in divers temptations." They were all undergoing trials and tests as believing Jews, who had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah. The First Epistle of Peter, which is also addressed to believing Hebrews tells the same story. They were in heaviness through manifold temptations. Their faith was severely tried as with fire (1 Peter i:6-7). James exhorts these sufferers not to be grieved or disturbed over these trials, but rather to count it a joy. These trials were the evidences of

their sonship and that their faith was real. Faith must be tried; the trial itself worketh patience, that is, endurance. This belongs to the practical experience of a believer. "For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Peter ii:21). If endurance has its perfect work, if the believer continues steadfast and in patience he will be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. The word "perfect" has been misinterpreted by some as if it meant an assumed Christian perfection or sinlessness. It does not mean that, but it means the perfect work of patience, enduring to the end, when self-will is subdued and the will of God is fully accepted. The result is that there is no deficiency in the practical life of the believer. The Lord Jesus is an example of it. He never did His own will, but patiently waited for the will of God and yielded a perfect obedience. Faith is power to suffer and to endure trials and testings.

2. The Resources of Faith: Verses 5-8. Such endurance is impossible without prayer. In the midst of trials and hardships, the various perplexities which come upon the believer, they, as well as we, lack wisdom; we often do not know what to do. Wisdom is needed, not human wisdom, but that wisdom which is from above. This wisdom enables us to discern His will and to follow the right guidance. It is obtained by an utter dependence on God, and the expression of that dependence is prayer. He giveth to all liberally, nor does He upbraid. We can come to Him at all times, and habitually wait on Him for guidance and direction; and as we wait on Him thus and count on Him there will be no disappointment. Often believers think they have divine guidance, but it is but following some kind of an impression, certain impulses, which may come from ourselves, or from the enemy. But constant waiting on the Lord and trusting in Him, this is wisdom. All this necessitates childlike faith, which means counting on His faithfulness and on an answer from Him. If we doubt His faithfulness or question His answer we cannot receive anything from Him. Hesitance about God, a doublemindedness,

depending upon something else besides God is in reality unbelief: "For he that wavereth (is not positive in his utter confidence and dependence) is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." If the believer is double-minded, looking to the Lord and at the same time looking elsewhere, he dishonors Him, and He cannot honor the believer and answer his prayer. How blessedly it was expressed by David, which perhaps was remembered by these believing Jews, when the inspired king wrote: "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him" (Psalm lxii:5).

3. The Realization of Faith: Verses 9-11. Faith makes things real. It lifts above the circumstances of life. The brother of low degree in the midst of his trials can glory in realizing faith that he is exalted, while the rich believer can rejoice in faith in his trials, that he is made low, that he can suffer loss, and learn from it his own poverty and lowness, realizing that all his riches are but for a moment, transitory "because as the flower of the grass he will pass away." This is the realization of faith in the believer; the believer of low degree in the midst of trials realizes that he is exalted, he glories in that, while the rich learns his low estate, that riches will fade away, but that he possesses an inheritance that fadeth not away.

4. The Conquest of Faith: Verses 12-15. Here is a beatitude: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." Overcoming faith will be rewarded. As the poor believer, or the rich believer, endures temptation, is proved and overcomes through faith, the Lord will give to him the promised crown of life.

The sources of temptations are mentioned in connection with this beatitude. There are two sources of temptations. There are temptations, the trial of faith which comes from God for our own good; there is a temptation of the flesh,

of inward evil, which is not of God, but of the devil. Trial of faith God permits, but when it comes to temptations of evil, to do evil, to be tempted in this fashion, God never is the author of that. God cannot be tempted with evil, nor tempteth He any man.

This passage settles the question with which so many believers are troubled: "Could the Lord Jesus Christ sin?" They generally quote in connection with this Hebrews iv:15, that He was tempted in all points as we are. They claim that "all points" includes temptation to sin coming from within. Even excellent Christians are at sea about this question. Our Lord Jesus Christ is very God. Being manifested in the flesh does not mean that He laid aside His Deity. James says, "God cannot be tempted with evil," for God is absolutely holy. Therefore our Lord could not be tempted with evil. He had nothing of fallen man in Him; the prince of this world (Satan) came and found nothing in Him. Furthermore, the correct translation of Hebrews iv:15 is as follows: But was in all points tempted like as we *are, apart from sin.* In all other points our blessed Lord was tempted, but never by indwelling sin, for He was absolutely holy in His human nature, given to Him by the Holy Spirit.

It is otherwise with man fallen, he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. The working, as revealed in verses 14-15, is illustrated in the case of David when lust brought forth sin and death (2 Sam. xi).

5. The Result of Faith: Verses 16-27. Evil has been traced to its source, and now we come to the other side. From God cometh every good and perfect gift and He is a God who does not change; with Him there is no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning. The greatest good and the greatest gift from such a God is the gift of His Only Begotten Son. Those who believe Him that sent the Son of God into the world (John v:24) are born again by the Word of Truth (see John iii:5; 1 Peter i:23; Ephes. i:13) to be a kind of first fruits of His creatures. His own holy nature is thus communicated to those who believe; it is

the result of faith. Of that new nature, the divine nature, it is written in 1 John iii:9: "He that is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he can not sin, because he is born of God." It means that there is no evil in the new nature; it is a holy nature, it will never tempt to sin. But the believer has an old nature, and that is evil, nor can it ever be anything else, "for that which is born of the flesh is flesh." Thus, begotten again by His own good and gracious will, we are the first fruits of that new creation which in God's own time will be revealed.

This new nature must produce the fruits of righteousness, hence the practical exhortation, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Hearing is the attitude of true faith, ever listening to that which God speaks in His Word; then slow to speak, because speech gives expression to what we are; and it needs caution not to let the old nature express itself; and slow to wrath, which is the flesh. Wrath does not work that practical righteousness which is pleasing to God. Then there is to be, as a result of true faith, a laying aside of all filthiness, all superfluity of naughtiness; this is the same putting off of which we read in the Pauline Epistles (Col. iii, etc.). This putting off is not the working of the law, but it is the result of the implanted Word, which received in meekness, saves; it is both the means of true salvation and the working out of that salvation into results of righteousness. But it needs more than hearers of the Word; we must be doers of it.

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed indeed." What is the law of liberty? It is not the law of Moses as some have imagined. The perfect law of liberty is explained in the context. It is the Word of God by which the believer is begotten again, it is the implanted Word, which teaches, instructs, guides and directs; it is the life which flows from the new nature, subject to the Word of God. It has often

been very aptly described as a loving parent who tells his child that he must go here or there; that is, the very places which he knows perfectly the child would be gratified to visit. Such is the law of liberty; as if one said to the child: 'Now, my child, you must go and do such and such a thing,' all the while knowing you cannot confer a greater favor on the child. It has not at all the character of resisting the will of the child, but rather of directing his affection in the will of the object dearest to him. The child is regarded and led according to the love of the parent, who knows what the desire of the child is—a desire that has been, in virtue of a new nature, implanted by God Himself in the child. He has given him a life that loves His ways and His Word, that hates and revolts from evil, and is pained most of all by falling through unwatchfulness into sin, if it seemed ever so little. The law of liberty therefore consists not so much in a restraint of gratifying the old man, as in guiding and guarding the new; for the heart's delight is in what is good and holy and true; the Word of God on the one hand exercises us in cleaving to that which is the joy of the Christian's heart, and strengthens us in our detestation of all that we know to be offensive to the Lord."*

This is the law of perfect liberty and in doing this there is blessedness. Then follows a definition of pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father. Religion does not mean here the inner life, but the outward manifestation of it. The fatherless and the widows are God's special objects of love and care; to visit such in their affliction is Christlike. How often this is quoted by those who do not believe in the Gospel of Grace and in the Cross of Christ, as if works of kindness were the true religion, by which man is saved and pleasing to God. The whole chapter shows how erroneous such an application is. And the other definition "to keep himself unspotted from the world," a true life of self surrender and separation, is generally overlooked.

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*Kelly on James.

II. THE ROYAL LAW. FAITH AND WORKS.

CHAPTER II.

1. The Faith of Christ With Respect to Persons. 1-5.
2. The Royal Law. 6-13.
3. Faith Must be Manifested by Works. 14-26.

1. The Faith of Christ with Respect to Persons. Verses 1-5. Here we have the synagogue mentioned, sufficient evidence that these Jewish believers were still gathering together in the Jewish fashion, and were not an ecclesia, an assembly, gathered out. The Epistle to the Hebrews, written many years after the Epistle of James, exhorted them to leave the camp behind and go outside of it (Hebrews xiii:13). Now in the synagogue among unbelieving Jews the rich man with his gold ring and fine clothing was accorded all honor, received the foremost place, while the poor man was told to stand up.* Such a practice is not according to the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, who Himself became poor so that by His poverty we might be rich. Faith, so prominent in the opening chapter of this Epistle, is here again insisted upon. Their action, even, in so small a matter as preference of the rich and influential, was not according to that faith, which worketh by love. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?"

2. The Royal Law. Verses 6-13. They had despised the poor, who were believers and walked in faith, while the rich oppressed them and dragged them before the judgment-seats. These of course were not believers, but mere professors, which again shows the mixed conditions of their gatherings. Furthermore, these rich people with their shameful behavior had blasphemed "that worthy Name" by which they were called, the name of the Lord of Glory. This respect of persons was a sin against the royal law:

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*The same spirit prevails in many "churches" too, with their pew rents, sometimes auctioned off to the highest bidder, while the poor are not welcomed in such aristocratic surroundings.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "If ye have respect to persons ye commit sin, and are convicted by the law as trangressors." If it is the matter of keeping the law, it must be kept in every detail and the entire law "for whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." They were in their consciences still under the law, not having fully seen "the law of liberty" which is the perfect law, flowing as we have learned from the first chapter, from the new nature guided by the Holy Spirit, producing the walk in the Spirit, thus fulfilling the righteousness of the law. James, therefore, appeals to the ten commandments as a witness to arouse their consciences. Then he mentions once more the law of liberty. "So speak ye, and so do, as they that be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment shall be without mercy to him that hath shown no mercy. Mercy rejoiceth over judgment." The perfect law of liberty produces mercy in the believer, but where no mercy is shown, no mercy can be expected, but judgment. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." (Matthew vii:1).

3. Faith Must be Manifested by Works. Verses 14-26. This section of the Epistle has produced much perplexity in the minds of some and led to a great deal of controversy. As it is well known, Dr. Martin Luther, thinking that James tried to answer and contradict Paul's statement in Romans, called James "an Epistle of straw." Others also hold that James corrects the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, the one being the inspired statement unfolding the Gospel of grace, the other the defense of that Gospel. But how could James answer either Epistle when they were not at all in existence, but written years later? When Paul wrote Romans and Galatians he knew James' Epistle. But did Paul try to correct James' argument? Not by any means. Both James and Paul wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Any thought of correcting a mistake impeaches the inerrancy of the Word of God.

There is no difficulty at all connected with this passage. The Holy Spirit through James shows that true faith which

justifies before God must be evidenced by works. "What should it profit, my brethren, though a man may say that he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save?" What kind of faith does he mean? It is a faith which assents to certain dogmas, consisting in a mental, intellectual assent, but it is not the living faith. A living faith manifests itself in works. That is what James insists upon. In their synagogue were those who professed to believe, but they did not show by their actions that they had the faith given by God; they only said that they had faith, works, as the proof of true faith were absent. "If a brother or a sister be naked (the fatherless and widows of the closing verse of the previous chapter), and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?" The answer to this question is, it certainly profits nothing. Such a behavior shows that the professed faith is dead. "So also faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself." The quality of faith is defined in the nineteenth verse. "Thou believest there is one God"—that which the Jew boasts of, that he believes in one God, and not like the heathen in many gods—"thou doest well; the demons also believe and tremble." Demons who also believe are still demons; so a man may believe and still be the natural man, live and act as such. The seal of true faith is works.

This the Holy Spirit now illustrates through the case of Abraham and Rahab, so different from each other, the one the Father of the faithful, the other the harlot of Jericho. The works of both bear witness to the character of true faith which produced them. In the case of Abraham he offered up his only son. Of Abraham it was said "he believed God." That he acted as he did, in unquestioning and unhesitating obedience, was the proof that he believed God. What he did was the seal put on his faith, by which he was justified before God. Rahab also believed, and her faith was demonstrated when she received the spies, hid them and associated herself with the people of God, while

she separated herself from her own people. Thus faith was seen as a perfect faith, as the true faith, by works. This is what the Holy Spirit teaches through James. In Romans justification before God is taught, which is by faith only. James does not say that our works justify us before God; such are not needed before an omniscient God, for He sees the faith of the heart, which man does not see. It is in exercise with regard to Him, by trust in His Word, in Himself, by receiving His testimony in spite of everything within and without—this true faith God sees and knows. But when our fellow-men ask, show me, then that faith shows itself by works. It is our justification before man. The argument is concluded by the terse comparison: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

III. THE EVILS OF THE TONGUE CORRECTED

CHAPTER III.

1. The Tongue and its Work. 1-12.
2. The Wisdom which is earthly and the Wisdom that is from above. 13-18.

1. The Tongue and its Work: Verses 1-12. The practical character of this Epistle is still more evidenced by the contents of this chapter. The tongue is the member of the human body which is made prominent. The human tongue is a great and wonderful gift of the Creator; with which no other earthly creature is endowed. It is written: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." It therefore reveals the real condition of the heart and by what it is governed.

The opening verse exhorts to caution as to teaching: "My brethren, be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive a greater judgment." Here another Jewish characteristic is mentioned. They are naturally forward and love to be heard, taking leadership. It seems as if many wanted

to be teachers and exercise public ministry. Perhaps this may refer to the "speaking in tongues" also, and the abuse of it as mentioned in 1 Corinthians xiv:20-33. In the first chapter the exhortation was given "slow to speak"; here it is applied to teaching. The exhortation is interesting in its bearing. First, is the warning not to assume leadership in teaching for self-display; even teaching as given to the members of the body of Christ must be carefully exercised, for it carries with it great responsibility, for one may preach to others and be himself disapproved (1 Cor. ix:27). If one is a teacher he must also practice what he teaches, otherwise he shall receive a greater judgment, not as to salvation, but as to disapproval before the award seat of Christ. In the second place, the exhortation shows that ministry among these Jewish Christians was in perfect liberty; they did not possess among themselves a special class in whom public teaching was vested. The next verse broadens and refers to speaking in general. The perfect man is he who does not offend in a word and therefore is able to govern the whole body. This introduces the tongue and its twofold possibility. "Behold we put bits in the horses mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature when it is set on fire by Gehenna." Horses, with their powerful bodies, are governed, led about and directed by the bit in their mouths; great ships which are driven about by gales and hurricanes, are steered by a small rudder, and so the human tongue is a little member which controls the whole man. It is like a tiny spark, yet that spark can set everything on fire and produce a disastrous conflagration. "Behold how much wood is kindled by how small a fire"—this is the correct rendering of the

text. The tongue of the natural man, unrestrained by anything, is a fire. It defiles the whole body. Our Lord speaks of this. "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts covetousness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark vii:20-23).

The tongue is the medium to reveal all these evils of the heart, and by its use for evil becomes the seducer of others. It can set everything on fire, if it is set on fire by Gehenna, (translated, hell); when it is under the control of the author of sin.

"For every kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed and hath been tamed of mankind; but the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we the Lord and Father, and therewith curse we men, made after the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth the fountain send forth out of the same opening sweet and bitter? Can a fig-tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? Neither can salt water yield sweet."

James vehemently attacks this evil, yet in the spirit of love, as seen by the repeated address, "My brethren." Sins of the tongue are especially prominent among Jews; evil speaking, back-biting and lying, so frequently mentioned in their own Scriptures. He speaks of the power man has to tame every kind of beasts and birds, even the creeping things, as serpents and things in the sea; but man, the conqueror of the brute creation, is helpless when it comes to the taming of the tongue; the tongue can no man tame. David knew of this, for he wrote: "I said, I will take heed of my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me" (Psa. xxxix:1). All resolutions man makes to keep his tongue in subjection are unsuccessful. But if man has a new nature with the Holy Spirit dwelling there, the tongue can be

governed and its evils overcome. Yet what sin is more frequently found among God's people than the sins of the tongue. It needs a constant watching and words must be weighed. Idle words, words which are not according to truth, or which reflect upon the character of another child of God, insinuating evil, magnifying faults, or words which belittle, words of envy and strife—are the sins of the tongue prevalent among God's people. How well then to consider constantly the exhortation of the first chapter of this Epistle: "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (i-19). The tongue is a restless evil; it is unceasingly at it and carries in its sinful use deadly poison.

Blessing and curse may be expressed by the tongue. While on the one hand, the tongue is an instrument of evil and for evil, the tongue of the believer, on the other hand, should be an instrument of righteousness and for the glory of God. What greater occupation on earth is possible than true worship in Spirit and truth! Through the tongue we can praise and exalt the Lord, bear testimony to that worthy Name, tell others of Him and become channels for eternal blessing. But how quickly, if uncontrolled, it may be used in the service of sin. Peter uttered with his tongue his great, God-given confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." But a short time after, that same tongue became the mouthpiece of Satan, when he rebuked the Lord for saying that He would go to Jerusalem to suffer and to die. What an inconsistency the tongue of man reveals! No such thing is found in nature anywhere. A tree does not produce two kinds of fruit; a fig tree bears no olives; a vine does not produce figs; nor does the same fountain gush forth salt water and sweet water.

2. The Wisdom that is Earthly and the Wisdom that is From Above: Verses 13-18. "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him shew out of a good behavior his works in meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envying and strife in your heart, boast not and lie not against the truth. This is not the wisdom which cometh down from above, but it is earthly, sensual, demoniacal. For where

envying and strife is, there is disorder and every evil thing." This exhortation, also, is suited to the Jewish believers to whom it was originally addressed. They are noted still for their jealousies, their strife and self-exaltation, these fruits of the fallen nature of man, the works of the flesh; they are, of course, also found among Gentile believers. Envyings, the sectarian spirit, the party spirit, producing bitterness and contentions, these things are not the manifestations of the wisdom which is from above, the fruit of the new nature and of the Spirit, but it is the earthly wisdom, springing from the natural man, behind which stands the author of sin.

"But the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without contention, without hypocrisy; and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace." This is the other side, the manifestation of the wisdom from above, the true fruits of the new nature and of the Spirit of God. It is first pure and then peaceable. It is pure, because it comes from God and leads to God. That which is from God cannot tolerate evil; it repudiates it. It aims at the glory of God and maintains His holy character. As a result it is peaceable, it seeks the fruits of peace among men, through the exercise of that love which the Holy Spirit describes in 1 Corinthians xiii. It is gentle: "Let your gentleness be known to all men" (Phil. iv); it is easy to be entreated, ready to yield. It knows nothing of stubbornness, prejudice and opinionativeness, the sources of so much strife and contention among believers. When a man is conscious that his wisdom is of a superior kind, one can understand his unwillingness to have his mind or will disputed; but the truth is, that there is nothing which so marks the superiority of grace and truth and wisdom, that God gives, as patience, and the absence of anxiety to push what one knows is right and true. It is an inherent and sure sign of weakness somewhere, when a man is ever urgent in pressing the value of his own words and opinions, or caviling

habitually at others. The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, and produces peace.

IV. FURTHER EXHORTATIONS TO RIGHT LIVING.

CHAPTER IV.

1. Fightings and Worldliness Rebuked. 1-6.
2. The Godly Walk. 7-17.

1. Fightings and Worldliness Rebuked: Verses 1-6. A strong rebuke follows the statements concerning the wisdom from beneath and the wisdom from above. It must be borne in mind that these exhortations are addressed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad; to say that these words mean believers only would be a serious mistake; while Christians are contemplated, those of the tribes of Israel who are not believers are equally in view. It applies therefore to those who were born of God, real believers, and to those who were not, an entirely different matter from the Pauline Epistles, which are exclusively addressed to the saints.

There was much strife and contention amongst them. Whence come wars and fightings? Certainly not from the wisdom which is above, which is first pure and then peaceable. But wars and fightings are the fruits of the old nature, the flesh. They come from the pleasures which war in the members. The gratification of the lusts of the natural man produces fightings and not the new nature, that which is from above; this includes all forms of lusts, not only those of the flesh, but the lust for power, the lust for pre-eminence and leadership; the lusts of the mind. "Ye lust and have not;" there is nothing that can satisfy the heart of man; any kind of lust will end in disappointment and remorse. "Ye kill and covet and cannot obtain." This is the way of the world in sin and away from God; it shows that James speaks to the unbelieving of the twelve tribes, and pictures their condition. "Ye fight and war. Ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it in your pleasures." The natural man is also religious and as such prays. But their prayers

sprang from the old nature, the desires of the flesh; they received not because they asked amiss. They prayed for selfish things, incited by selfish motives, so that they might gratify their sinful natures. Even true believers often ask and receive not, because they ask amiss, out of selfish reasons, to minister to their own pleasures and gratification. If the Lord would answer such prayers He would minister to that which is evil.

The world and its unsatisfying pleasures controlled those described in the foregoing words, some of whom may have been professing believers. The wisdom which is earthly, sensual and demoniac, they followed. And now the writer breaks out in a passionate exclamation: "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore would be the friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God." Here others than unbelievers are contemplated. The sphere of the natural man is the world; his walk is according to the course of this world; he is governed by the lust of the flesh, the lust of eyes and the pride of life. As such he is an enemy of God by wicked works and by nature a child of wrath. (Ephesians ii:1-3). The true believer, saved by grace, is not of the world, even as our Lord was not of the world (John xvii:16). Grace has severed the believer from the world; the Cross of Christ has made him dead to the world and the world dead unto him. Hence the exhortation in John's Epistle "Love not the world, neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John ii:15-16). And believers may turn back to the world, like Demas, and love it for a time. James calls such adulteresses; they leave Him to whom they are espoused, even Christ, and turn to another. The term must have reminded the Israelites of the Old Testament passages in which unfaithful, apostate Israel is pictured as an adulteress and playing the harlot (Jeremiah iii:9; Ezekiel xvi:23; Hosea ii). It is a solemn

exhortation which every true believer should consider carefully; friendship with the world means enmity against God. Verse 5 should be rendered as follows: "Or think ye that the Scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the Spirit, who dwelleth in us, long unto envying?" All the Scriptures testify that worldliness and godliness cannot exist together; think ye then that these Scriptures speak in vain? And the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the believer, does not lust unto envy, for He opposes the flesh and those who walk in the Spirit do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. But he giveth more grace, yea grace sufficient to overcome by faith the world, for faith is the victory that overcomes the world. He quotes Proverbs iii:34. God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

2. The Godly Walk: Verses 6-17. Exhortations to a godly, holy walk follow. Submit yourselves, therefore to God; be subject unto Him, have no friendship with the world, but be His friend. There is one who would drag the believer back into the world, as Pharaoh tried to get Israel back to Egypt. Guard against it by resisting the devil and he will flee from you. This is a blessed promise which all His faithful people have tested at all times. We are not to flee from the devil, but to resist him and as we do so in the name of our Lord, the enemy will be helpless and flee from us. Another blessed exhortation follows. "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you." Next James addresses again those who had not yet fully turned to the Lord. It is a call to repentance. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall exalt you."

The attitude towards other brethren is made clear in verses 11 and 12: "Speak not one against another, brethren." Speaking evil, the sin of the tongue is once more mentioned by James. There are seven verses in which exhortations to guard the tongue and speech are given: i:19, 26, ii:12, iii:9, 16, iv:11 and v:9. It seems that this must have been

the besetting sin of these believing Jews. Evil, of course, must always be judged, whether it is unsound doctrine or an evil conduct; this belongs to the responsibility of a believer. But God alone, the righteous Judge, knows the heart and its motives. Speaking against a brother and judging him, that is, pronouncing a sentence of condemnation upon him, is the same as speaking against the law and judging the law. But if one judges the law, the same is not a doer of the law, but a judge; doing this we take the place of Him who is both, the lawgiver and the judge, that is the Lord. The final paragraph urges dependence on the Lord and warns against making plans for the future without looking to the Lord and His will concerning His people. "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into this city, and spend a year there, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow." Such a language shows self-will, forgetfulness of God, and self-confidence. It is planning with God left out. No one knows what the morrow may bring forth; but God knows. "For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will and we live, we will also do this or that." The child of God who walks in godly fear, trusting the Lord, planning as under Him, will constantly remember that all depends on the Lord and on His will. It is a wholesome habit to add always, when we speak of the future, "if the Lord will and we live"; this is pleasing in His sight and a testimony of our submission to Him and dependence on Him. Otherwise it is the boasting, vain-gloriousness of the self-secure world, which boasts and plans, without thinking of God and His will. The last verse must not be detached from what goes before. "To him, therefore, that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Sin does not consist only in doing evil, but if we do not the good we know, it is also sin. If we do not act according to the fact that we are entirely dependent on God as to the future, we sin.

"This verse should forever settle the question of sinless perfection for a Christian: 'To him who knoweth to do good,

and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' This is much more, of course, than the prohibition of positive evil. There is a negative evil which we have carefully to keep before us. The responsibility of knowing what it is good to do is one that, while we may in a general way allow it, yet deserves far deeper consideration than we often would even desire to give it. How solemn it is to think of all the good that we *might* do, and yet have *not* done! How slow we are to recognize that this, too, is sin! We are so apt to claim for ourselves a kind of freedom here which is not Scriptural freedom; and there is no doubt, also, that we may abuse a text like this to legality, if there be legality in our hearts. We are to be drawn, not driven. Yet the neglect of that which is in our hand to do—which we, perhaps, do not realize our capacity for, and that only through a spirit of self-indulgence or a timidity which is not far removed from this—such neglect, how hard it is to free ourselves of it, and how much do we miss in this way of that which would be fruitful in blessing for ourselves as well as for others! for, indeed, we can never sow fruit of this kind without reaping what we have sown; and the good that we can do to others, even if it requires the most thorough self-sacrifice, yet will be found in the end to have yielded more than it cost, and to have wrought in the interests of him who has not considered even or sought this."*

V. THE COMING OF THE LORD AND THE LIFE OF FAITH

CHAPTER V.

1. The Oppression by the Rich and their coming Doom. 1-6.
2. Be Patient unto the Coming of the Lord. 7-12.
3. The Prayer of Faith and the Life of Faith. 13-20.

The Oppression by the Rich and their Coming Doom: Verses 1-6. The two classes whom James addresses stand out very prominently in this final chapter of his Epistle.

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*Numerical Bible.

The rich oppressors certainly are not believers but the unbelieving rich; they are not addressed as "brethren"; but others are in verse 7 and exhorted to patience. Both classes, the unbelieving rich and the believing remnant are confronted by the coming of the Lord. "Go to now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have heaped together treasures in the last days."

The present age, which began with the death and resurrection of our Lord, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, is spoken of as "the last days" and "the last time" (see Heb. i:1 and 1 John ii:18); this age will be followed by the dispensation of the fullness of times, the times of restoration as promised by God's holy prophets (Eph. i:10; Acts iii:19-20), the age of the Kingdom when Christ reigns and His saints with Him. And this present age will end with the coming of the Lord to execute judgment, to right all wrong and judge all unrighteousness. These rich Israelites heaped treasures together, and, as we shall see later, acted outrageously, thereby showing that they did not believe in the day of the Lord, when He will be manifested in judgment glory. Yet their own Scriptures announced exactly that which James here states. See Isaiah ii:10-20 and especially Zephaniah i:14-18. In anticipation of that coming day he calls on them to weep and howl, and announces the fate of their treasures.

Let us remember that the Epistle was written years before the destruction of Jerusalem. When Jerusalem fell, and even before its fall, many of the rich Jews became paupers; they were ruined, tortured and murdered, as Josephus tells us. The fall of Jerusalem with its awful horrors, in the year 70 A. D., was a judgment of the Lord, but not the day of the Lord and the Coming of the Lord. What happened then to the stubborn unbelieving masses will happen again, only on a larger scale during the coming great tribulation and

when the Lord returns in power and in great glory. We believe therefore, that this exhortation to the rich has a special bearing for the future, during the very end of the age.

But they were oppressing the poor as well. "Behold, the hire of the laborers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out; and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure; ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the Just One; he doth not resist you." Oppression of the poor, yea, the poor of their own people, is another characteristic of the Jewish people. The Prophet Amos rebuked it in his day, when the poor were downtrodden and robbed by the rich. It is so today and will be so in the future. And the money which was taken from the poor was used by the rich to live in luxury and wanton pleasures. The spirit they manifested in heaping treasures together, oppressing the poor and needy, robbing them, and living in pleasure, is the same which condemned and killed the Just One, the Lord Jesus Christ, who did not resist. To apply these words primarily and altogether to our Lord can hardly be done. What was done to the Lord of Glory these unbelievers did to His true followers. It will be so again during the great tribulation, under Antichrist, when the godly remnant will be persecuted by those who side with the false Messiah. See Psalm lxxix:1-3; Daniel xii:1; Matthew xxiv:9-25; Revelation xi, xii and xiii.

2. Be Patient unto the Coming of the Lord: Verses 7-12. "Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord is at hand." He addresses in these words the believers, the suffering remnant amongst the unbelieving masses which attended the synagogue. They are to be patient and suffer in patience, without resisting. The coming of the Lord, which is mentioned twice in these verses, is His visible and glorious manifestation,

the same which our Lord speaks of in Matthew xxiv:30-31. The first Epistle to the Thessalonians, which contains that unique revelation of the Coming of the Lord for His Saints, the resurrection of the holy dead and the sudden transformation of the living saints, to be caught up together in clouds to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. iv:13-18) had not yet been given. The mystery "we shall not all sleep but be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinth. xv), was then unknown. And let us note here, that this is one of the mysteries nowhere made known in the Old Testament. The coming of the Lord, we repeat, is that coming which is so many times announced in the Prophetic Word of the Scriptures. "The first generation of Christians expected to witness in the near future the personal reappearance of Christ on earth to close the old dispensation by punishing unbelievers, and delivering the Christians. These expectations were partly realized when the fall of Jerusalem closed the old Jewish dispensation by the destruction of the Temple and the final cessation of the Levitical worship of Jehovah. At the same time misery and ruin befell the Jewish nation which had rejected and crucified our Lord. As regards any more exact fulfilment, the statements of the New Testament must be interpreted according to the principle laid down in 2 Peter iii:8 and 1 John ii:18."* That the destruction of Jerusalem and the judgment of the nation was predicted by our Lord is known to all, that the event when it came in the year 70 is the coming of the Lord, is not true.

James exhorts his suffering brethren to be like the husbandman who has to wait between the sowing time and the harvest. But here is another wrong interpretation. The latter rain of which James speaks has been foolishly interpreted as meaning a spiritual latter rain, another Pentecost. This is one of the star arguments of present day Pentecostalism with its supposed revival of apostolic gifts. The

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*From New Century Bible. One is grateful to find this paragraph in a work which is more or less on the side of the Destructive Criticism.

former and latter rain of which James speaks has no such meaning; it is purely the rainfall in nature. In Palestine there are two distinct rainy seasons, one in the Spring, the other in the Fall. (See Deut. xi:14).

Then follow other words of encouragement. "Murmur not, brethren, one against the other, that ye be not judged; behold the judge standeth before the door." Among themselves they were to guard against any friction and fretfulness, always remembering Him who is the judge, and who standeth before the door. They were also to remember the examples in suffering and patience of the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, the patience of Job, and how blessedly his suffering ended through the pity and mercy of the Lord. There is a warning also against oath making, such a common thing amongst the Jews. (See our Lord's warning in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew v:33-37.)

3. The Prayer of Faith and the Life of Faith: Verses 13-20. The Epistle closes with practical exhortations to prayer and the exercise of faith. "Is any among you suffering? Let him pray." A short but weighty instruction. Instead of murmuring, as their forefathers did, instead of complaining in suffering, prayer must be exercised. The godly in Israel always made prayer their refuge and especially are the Psalms rich in this direction. "Is any cheerful? Let him sing psalms." The Psalms were used extensively in the synagogue. To teach upon this statement, as has been done, that the church should sing nothing but the Psalms, and reject the great hymns of the saints of God of all ages, born often in adversity and in deep soul exercise, is far fetched. Much in the Psalms does not express true Christianity at all. "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the assembly; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." This exhortation demands a closer scrutiny and examination. Of late this instruction by James has been greatly misapplied by faith-healers. There

are many extremists who teach that here is a commandment to the church how sickness among the Saints should be dealt with; that means, to alleviate bodily ills, must be fully discarded and if they are used, it is unbelief in the power of God and a hindrance to faith. There are men and women all over Christendom, who go about with a message of healing of diseases, who anoint the sick by the hundreds and thousands, claiming that this is the only way that illness is to be treated. Then these same healers claim miraculous cures which are, after careful investigation, mostly found to be falsehoods. Some of these advocates of this method of healing, denouncing means and the use of physicians, were taken sick and had to use means to overcome their bodily ills. The entire subject of "Faith-Healing" we cannot examine here; nor can we enlarge upon the claims of "Christian Science" and other metaphysical cults and systems. Supernatural healing of diseases is claimed by Romish Catholicism, by the shrines and holy places of the Greek Orthodox church, by Spiritism, Mormonism and in many pagan systems. We confine our remarks to the passage before us.

It has been explained by some that the words of James mean that which should be done in case sickness unto death has seized upon a believer. It is then interpreted to mean "Prayer shall save the dying man from the punishment of his sins; and after his death, the Lord will raise him up in resurrection." This view we reject. No prayer of faith is needed for the coming physical resurrection of a believer. Romanism has made out of it "the sacrament of extreme unction" which is another invention.

Inasmuch as "the anointing with oil" seems to be the point most stressed by divine healers, we shall examine this first. What does it mean? Here we must remember the Jewish character of the Epistle. We have shown before that the believers whom James addresses were still closely identified with Judaism, hence they practised many things peculiar to Judaism. Anointing with oil was extensively used in the ceremonies of the Jews. Kings and priests were anointed,

oil being liberally poured upon the head, denoting outwardly the fact of consecration to office, and symbolically the Spirit of God, which they needed for the exercise of their functions. Furthermore, oil was also very widely used for health and comfort. It was and is still a great remedial agent in the Orient. The Good Samaritan poured into the wounds of the man who had fallen among the thieves oil and wine. Oil was used in cases of fever and most generally in skin diseases. Anointing the sick with oil was a general practice, as can be shown from talmudical literature. In Mark vi:13, we read "And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." Would they not have been healed if they had not been anointed with oil? The anointing with oil was an old custom which the disciples made use of, but the Lord in commissioning them in connection with the Kingdom message did not tell them that they should anoint the sick with oil; they did it, for such was the universal practice. If James commands these Jewish believers who were sick to be anointed with oil he re-affirmed therefore this old Jewish custom. Oil is something beneficial to the body, a remedy, just as wine is recommended by the Spirit of God as a remedy for the ills of the body (I Timothy v:23). It is therefore an open question whether oil may not stand here also for legitimate means to be used in case of illness. Divine healers carry with them a small bottle of oil and daub the forehead with a drop of oil, but this is not the anointing commanded here. Where is the authority to say that a drop of oil must be put on the forehead?

But it is very striking that apart from this passage, in this transition epistle, nowhere else in the New Testament (except in Mark vi:13), do we read anything about this anointing with oil in case of sickness. Why did not Paul write to Timothy, who often had infirmities, "Call the elders, let them anoint you with oil," but, instead of it, the divinely given remedy "a little wine" is urged upon him. And Paul was sick himself, suffered with his eyes, which probably was the thorn in the flesh. Trophimus was sick

in Miletus. But nowhere this Jewish ceremony, anointing with oil, is mentioned. The Epistles which are the high-water mark of divine revelation, are the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians; we find nothing in these Epistles about healing of diseases by anointing and prayer. Nor is it mentioned in any of the other Pauline Epistles. In Corinthians the gift of healing is found among the gifts of the Spirit, but he who possessed that gift had no need of using oil besides. Our conclusion, then, is that the anointing with oil in this passage is something customary with the Jews, which is not meant to be perpetuated in the church, for if such were the fact the Holy Spirit would have stated it elsewhere. We pass over the question as to true elders, which are to be called. Many of those who go about as divine healers are women. Who has ever heard of "women elders"? In fact, in the public healing services which have become such a common thing in our days, the question of elders is entirely ignored. Big advertisements appear in the papers that services for the healing of the sick are to be held. As a result hundreds come and are ready to do anything, to believe anything, if only some hope is held out that they might be cured. They readily submit to the ceremony of having a little oil put on their foreheads, but the command, that the sick person, is to call for the elders of the church, those of authority is ignored. The question is, "Do we still have the elders in the Apostolic sense?" These are matters which are completely set aside by modern faith healers.

But the emphasis in the passage is on "the prayer of faith." The prayer of faith, not the anointing with oil, shall save the sick. No believer denies the efficacy of believing prayer, yet always guarded by the condition "if it be His will." In case of sickness the child of God will not send for a physician in the first place, but the believer turns to the Lord and puts himself in His gracious and merciful hands. The passage here seems to be the matter of sickness as a chastening from the Lord on account of specific sins committed. In such a case when self-judgment has brought the

matter into His light, the promise can be claimed "the prayer of faith shall save the sick."

"Was it intended to be a direction universally applicable to all cases, and to be carried out at all times, in all places, and under all conditions? Surely—most surely not. For note that there is no question at all as to the result: 'the prayer of faith *shall save* (it is certain) the sick and the Lord will raise him up.'

"Now, we know perfectly well that this is not and *cannot* be the invariable outcome of all sickness. The vast majority of mankind—yes, of Christians—has died as the result of some sickness: has this been because 'elders' have not been called? Have they come to the end of that life here because they were not anointed with oil, and the prayer that always goes up from loving hearts was not the prayer of faith, and since not of faith, was sin? Who would not reject such conclusions with abhorrence? Yet are they inevitable, if this Scripture be pressed as being the one divinely given direction in the case of all sickness.

"In it every act, every movement, must be in faith: that is recognizing the Lord's hand in the sickness, and the Lord's mind in removing it. But where is the great and precious promise on which faith can always rest, that shall make healing sure? In one case only, and that is if the sickness does not come from constitutional weakness, as with Timothy, or the hardship of a Christian devotion as with Epaphroditus, or any other natural cause—but as *a chastening of the Lord* for some specific sins committed, and this confessed and put away, the chastening ceases.

"And this is naturally enough the point of view of such a writer as James. Freedom from sickness consequent on obedience was interwoven in the first covenant: "And the Lord will take away from thee all sickness, and will put none of the diseases of Egypt, which thou knowest upon thee; but will lay them upon all that hate thee"—is that what the Christian desires today: his diseases put on anyone else who may hate him? yet is that involved in that covenant.

"What, then, more natural than that this writer, who, although Christian, is still on the ground of a regenerate and sincerely pious Jew, should regard sickness in a light that is common to both Christian and Jew—as a chastening for sin."*

With this we leave this portion of the Epistle, which has led to so much misunderstanding. To help the reader in getting the true conception we add in a brief appendix, at the close of these annotations, the comment as it is given in the "Numerical Bible."

"Confess, therefore, your sins one to another, that ye may be healed." This brings out fully the fact that the sickness in view is on account of specific sins. When the sins are confessed and judged, grace intervenes, and God in mercy heals. Rome builds upon this passage the miserable invention of the confessional. But it does not mean confession to a man-made "priest," but a simple confiding of believers among themselves.

The great value of prayer is next pointed out by James. "The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working"; this is a rendering adopted by many. He cites the case of Elijah. He was a man "of like passions with us" as we learn from the historical record of the Scriptures, which tells us of his great infirmities, as well as of his remarkable faith. He prayed feverently and rain was withheld, he prayed again and God answered his faith. The God of Elijah is our God still, who delights to answer the fervent prayer of the righteous man; the power of prayer can never be separated from the character of him who prays.

"My brethren, if any among you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins." With this the Epistle ends abruptly. Faith must be manifested by love towards those who err. The exhortation finds an application in a general way, but primarily to those who know the truth

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*F. C. Jennings in "Our Hope."

and have backslidden. This is learned from the words "if any among you"; the application in a general way is also fully warranted. The ending without greeting has led some critics to assume, that the Epistle is made up of passages from sermons, compiled quite late, by a man by the name of James. The internal as well as the historical evidences refute this assumption.

APPENDIX
James v:14-16

By F. W. Grant

The anointing with oil in the name of the Lord seems to be the claim of an authority which those of whom we are speaking would be the last to assert. No doubt the emphasis is laid here upon the "prayer of faith," to save the sick; and the prayer of faith certainly should not be lacking with us. We need not doubt how much we should gain if there were a more simple and constant reference to the Lord in these matters, and we cannot but remember the example of old of one who sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians, and died. The use of means that are in our hand may easily be perverted to the slighting of this way of faith; and it would certainly be far better to leave out the means in any case rather than to leave out the Lord. The distinct and united acknowledgment of our dependence upon Him in all these cases is due from us, and we suffer loss if God is not acknowledged; but then for this, no elders or anointing can be needed, and the prescription of these things makes it evident that something more is contemplated here than simply the prayer of faith. Even so, there is no *prohibition* of means, if there be no *prescription* of them; and in God's ordinary way of working He certainly works by them. He could sustain us at any time without food, but we do not ordinarily expect Him to do this, although the food may profit nothing except the Lord please to use it. We cannot but remember in this way the prescription of a little wine to Timothy, while at the same time he was in the very midst

of an assembly which had its regularly appointed elders. In Judaism let us remember how, at the beginning of it, God was pleased to act miraculously in a marked way; and in the beginning of Christianity in Jerusalem, we find the same signs and miracles accompanying the Word. This was a most suited testimony to the new doctrine being published, a testimony which was also recognized in our Lord's case by the Jews as that which was to establish a new doctrine (Mark i:27). The waning of all miraculous powers when once the testimony was established is marked, and cannot be denied. People may impute it, as they do impute it, to a lack of faith on the part of Christians; but with regard to such things one might certainly expect faith to be manifested as much as in other things. In fact, they would be things most earnestly clung to, for the manifest benefit and the display of power in them. On the other hand, the prevalence of corruption which, whatever may be our own individual views of truth, cannot be but acknowledged, would naturally make it less suited that the Church so failing should still preserve her ornaments; but the reason for the decline of miracles is evidently other than this. In the history of the Acts we find an apparent absence of such things, where, for instance, as in Berea, men were employed with the Word itself to test the doctrine by it. Although in general, as the Lord promised, miraculous signs did follow at the beginning those who believed, yet even then this was never universally true. It could not be pleaded as the necessary mark of Christian faith. "Are all workers of miracles?" says the apostle; and the question in itself supposes a negative answer. Thus, if a whole assembly lacked, there was no *necessary* failure, and need be no disappointment in this case; while in Corinth their "coming behind in no gift" was no necessary evidence of a right state of soul. It seems even, one would say, a matter of course that God never meant our daily lives to be full of manifest miracles. He never meant to demonstrate the truth after that fashion. He would leave it, rather, to its own inherent and spiritual power. Men easily crave miracles;

but the whole generation in the wilderness, the constant witness of these, nevertheless perished for their unbelief. The miracles work no faith, although they might, and would, awaken attention to that which God presented as an object for faith; yet to those who believed in Christ, when they saw the miracles, He did not commit Himself (John ii:23-25). Every way it should be plain to-day that what goes for such amongst men commonly is no longer the mark upon true faith or the truth itself which calls for faith. The same things exactly can be wrought by those who deny Christian fundamentals as by those who profess them; and where is the evidence then? No set of men in the present day can be found who can adjust broken bones without surgery. If God wanted to show what He was doing, do we think that a broken bone would be a greater difficulty to Him than anything else?

Moreover, the signs and wonders of the time of the end are spoken of as rather giving evidence to falsity than to truth, to Antichrist than to Christ; and there will be signs and wonders wrought yet, which, as the Lord has said, would deceive, if it were possible, even the very elect. Thus, then we can easily understand (and especially in such an epistle as the present—an epistle to that nation to whom God had testified by signs and wonders of old, and would repeat to them now, in evidence that Christ was in nothing behind Moses) how we should find a reference of this kind to powers which might connect themselves with the elders of the Christian assembly, and yet understand why James should leave us, as it were, at a loss how to apply these things to ourselves. We can never be wrong in believing that the prayer of faith is still really the power that will save the sick, let means be used or not used; but the use of means seems in general rather according to the Lord's mind than against it. His common way is to work through that which He has Himself ordained, and there are plainly herbs for the healing of men. The very presence of such powers is proof that the Lord has given them; and if He has given them, it is for us. Faith can acknowledge Him in these,

as well as be perfectly happy in trusting Him apart from all consideration of these. The prohibition of them, if God designed it, would surely be furnished to us.

Moreover, God at no time intended that things should be left, as it were, absolutely in man's hands, even though it were the hand of faith, as the doctrines taught suppose. The prayer of faith may be that which saves the sick, and yet, after all, that be far from meaning that we can find in every case a faith which should do so. God has His own will and His own way; and while we can always reckon upon Him to answer the soul that looks to Him, yet the way of His answer we do not always know. The apostle prays that the thorn in the flesh might depart from him, but it did not depart. God turned it to greater blessing. That was an answer to the prayer, but it was not such an answer as men usually count as that. Could any one suppose that among Christians, if everything were absolutely right, the sick would always be raised up, that death would hardly obtain at all, except in the extremest old age? We may imagine any such fancies, but fancies they are, and nothing else. Yet it is plain there is an appeal to God advocated here which we are always right in making, and from which we may always expect an answer in the goodness of Him whom we address. More than this, the Lord may give distinct light as to His mind that will enable one, as to anything, to ask with assurance, without the possibility of denial. If we are near enough to God for this we have cause indeed to be thankful; but we had better be humble about it, and be very sure that we have it before we claim it.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

The First Epistle of Peter

Introduction

The genuineness of this epistle is confirmed by the most ancient sources. Polycarp, who was personally acquainted with the Apostle John, cites the Epistle of Peter. Papias of Hierapolis made use of the Epistle likewise. This was about the middle of the second century. Two quotations of Peter's Epistle are found in a very ancient source, "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," a kind of manual going back to 100 A. D. All the other documents of the first and second centuries show that the Epistle was unanimously known and accepted as Peter's.

The critics have not left it unattacked. We do not need to quote the different theories advanced by Cludius, Eichhorn (the man who coined the phrase "higher criticism") De Wette, Bauer, Davidson, Pfleiderer, Harnack and others. The main objection seems to be that the expressions used in this Epistle are too much like the thoughts and expressions of the Apostle Paul as used in his Epistles, so, as it is assumed, Peter could not have written it. This theory was expanded into the hypothesis that some one must have written it who had spent considerable time with Paul, so that he adopted Pauline ideas and phrases; John Mark has been suggested by some to be that person. Critics have pointed out many parallels with different Pauline Epistles. "In considering these parallels, allowance must be made for ideas and phraseology, hymns, prayers, confessions of faith, and other matter, which was the common property of the primitive church; and would introduce a degree of similarity into the writings of different authors. But much of the thought and language of First Peter belongs to what was characteristic of the teaching of Paul and his followers as distinct from that of the Palestinian or Jewish churches. The parallels in any case, show a dependence upon Pauline teaching. But we may go further. There is a great variety

of opinion as to the precise character and extent of the dependence of First Peter on the writings of Paul. It has been suggested that it is just possible that Paul himself was the author of First Peter, the passages in which Peter's name occurs being later insertions; and again that this Epistle and Ephesians were the work of one author. But that dependence, especially on Romans, is very widely recognized."* All these objections, speculations, and theories denying the Petrine authorship are answered by the fact of inspiration. Peter no doubt knew and read the Epistles of Paul; in fact he speaks of them in his second letter (2 Peter iii:15-16). But that does not mean that he copied and reproduced the statements found in some of Paul's Epistles; nor does it mean that he depended on Paul when he wrote his Epistle. The Holy Spirit who guided Paul's pen guided also the hand of Peter; all is the direct work of the Holy Spirit. If Peter uses some of the great truths found in the Epistles of Paul it was because the Spirit of God desired to have them restated. If we examine these parallels closely we discover that they cover the most essential truths of Christianity and are used for practical exhortations. Those whom Peter addressed needed these truths and the practical application. On the other hand there are many internal evidences which prove that none but Peter wrote this Epistle. It has been pointed out that there is a similarity between Peter's statements in the Book of Acts and in this first Epistle. Compare Acts iv:11; ii:32; iii:15 with I Peter ii:7; i:3, 4, 8 and v:i. He also uses a peculiar word for the cross. It is the word "*Tree*" (the Greek word *Xulon*). See Acts v:30; x:39; I Peter ii:24. Furthermore, the writer speaks of having been an eyewitness of the Lord's sufferings (v:1). He describes these sufferings, how He was reviled and reviled not, how He suffered and threatened not. And Peter was an eyewitness of all this. Nor is it without significance that in this Epistle alone the Lord Jesus Christ is called "the chief Shepherd." On the shores of Lake Tiberias the risen Lord

*New Century Bible.

restored Simon Peter to service and told him "shepherd My sheep," hence Peter speaks of the Lord as the chief Shepherd, and also exhorts the elders to be faithful in feeding the flock of God. As it is with all other critical objections to the traditional belief as to the inspired authorship of the different Bible books, the objections against the Petrine authorship of this Epistle are wholly worthless. Peter wrote this Epistle. The date cannot be definitely settled, but must be placed between 62 and 65 A. D.

SIMON PETER

A brief review of the life and service of the Apostle Peter will be helpful in understanding his writings. He was born at Bethsaida in Galilee, from which Philip came also (John i:44, 45). His name was Simon (or Simeon, Acts xv:14) and his father's name was Jonas. He had a brother by name of Andrew, and the three, the father, Simon and Andrew were fishermen at Capernaum. There Simon Peter had his home, as he was a married man (Matthew vii:14; 1 Cor. ix:5). His brother Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist and when he pointed out the Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God, Andrew followed Him. Andrew brought Peter to the Lord (John i:35-43). When the Lord beheld Him he revealed His omniscience, for He said: "Thou art Simon the son of Jona, thou shalt be called Cephas," which is the aramaic word for stone. When later Peter, in answer to the question "Whom say ye that I am?" said: "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God," the Lord Jesus said to him, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew xvi:17-18). The Greek word *Petros* means a small rock, or piece of a rock; the Greek for rock is *Petra*, the word our Lord used when He designated the foundation of the church. It is not Peter, but Christ Himself, who is the rock. In his Epistle Peter contradicts by the Spirit of God the miserable invention that he is the rock upon which the church is built, as claimed by Rome and

even by Protestant expositors. (See I Peter ii:4-8.) The Gospel records, as well as the Epistle to the Galatians, give us a good description of his peculiar character. He was impulsive, forward and self-confident, yet he was true, loving and faithful. Before he denied the Lord, the Lord Jesus announced Peter's great failure and assured His disciple of His prayer, when Satan would sift him as wheat. In connection with this our Lord gave him a commission. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." His denial, his bitter repentance, his restoration at the lake of Tiberias, the still greater commission to shepherd the sheep and the lambs of the flock of God, are so well known, that we need not to enlarge upon it. The Lord also committed to him the "keys of the kingdom of the heavens," not to heaven, nor to the church, but to the kingdom of the heavens, that is to that which is now on earth. The Book of Acts gives us the history of the use of the keys. He used the keys in connection with the Jews on the day of Pentecost, when he preached to them and, in preaching, opened the door to those who heard him; then he used the keys once more in the household of Cornelius (Acts x) and then by preaching he opened the door to the Gentiles. This is what our Lord meant. Here is another significant fact, in writing his Epistles he never mentioned this commission of the keys. According to Rome and other ritualistic churches he should have stated in the beginning of his Epistle that he is the supreme holder of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. But not Peter was to be the great Apostle to the Gentiles; the Lord called Paul to this position. Peter is the prominent actor in the beginning of the Book of Acts, when the Gospel was preached "to the Jew first." After Jerusalem rejected that Gospel and the Apostle to the Gentiles had been called, Paul becomes the prominent figure in Acts. Peter is mentioned only once more in connection with the council held in Jerusalem (Acts xv). In Galatians chapter ii his Jewish character in withdrawing from the Gentile believers after he had fellowshipped them is rebuked by Paul. In that chapter we also read that Peter with James and John were

to minister to those of the circumcision, that is the Jews; while Paul and Barnabas were to go to the Gentiles.

After this incident we hear nothing more about Peter. The Spirit of God might have given us a complete account of what he did, where he went, but all is passed over in silence. The omniscient Spirit saw what would come in Christendom. He knew that ritualism would give to Peter a place of supremacy in the body of Christ which does not belong to him at all. Therefore Peter's life and service are passed over by the Holy Spirit and we hear nothing more about him in the inspired records. But we hear from him in the two Epistles which bear his name and which he wrote.

But while Scripture is silent, tradition is not. It is claimed by the historian Eusebius that he was Bishop of Antioch, the church which he founded. But the latter statement is contradicted by Acts xi:19-21 and the former is equally incorrect. Other ancient sources declare that he was very active in Asia Minor. That he must have ministered widely may be gained from 1 Corinthians ix:5: "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?" But the entire ministry he rendered is not revealed.

Another tradition claims that he settled in Rome to oppose the Samaritan sorcerer Simon Magus (Acts viii). Justin Martyr in his writings states that Simon Magus was worshipped in Rome as a god on account of his magical powers. On account of it they erected a statute on an island in the River Tiber inscribed "*Simoni Deo Sancto.*" Actually there was found in the year 1574 in the Tiber a stone with the inscription "*Semoni Sanco Deo Fidio Sacrumi.*" i.e. "to the god Semo Sancus," the Sabine Hercules, which is definite proof that Justin Martyr was mistaken. Upon this rests the legend that Peter went to Rome to oppose Simon Magus. It is claimed that Peter was Bishop in Rome for 25 years and founded what is called "the Holy See," which later developed into the abominable papacy with its lies. Peter never saw Rome. As we shall show later in this introduction, there is sufficient Scriptural authority to contra-

dict this legend. Another legend states that he was martyred in Rome, where the Lord appeared to him, when Peter had left the city to escape death. That he should die the martyr's death had been announced by our Lord, as well as the manner of his death by crucifixion. Nobody knows where that death took place. When he wrote his second Epistle it was a brief time before his death (2 Peter i:14); but that Epistle was not written from Rome.

Did Peter Write from Babylon or from Rome?

At the close of the Epistle we read the following salutation: "The church that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you, and so does Marcus my son." "*The church that is*" does not appear in the original text; it has, therefore, been explained that Peter meant his wife, though it appears more probable that he meant the other elect ones who were with him in Bablyon. The fact is established that when he wrote this Epistle Peter was in Babylon. But does this mean the literal Babylon on the banks of the Euphrates or the mystical Babylon, which is Rome? Roman Catholic writers claim that it means the city of Rome, and a large number of Protestant commentators side with this view. They claim that he was in Rome with Mark. They say that Babylon has the same meaning as the word has in the Book of Revelation, that is, not the literal Babylon, but Rome. There is no definite proof that Rome was universally called "Babylon" before John received it in his Patmos vision; it is claimed that the persecution under Nero led Christians to call Rome by the name of Babylon; but it is more likely that the name Babylon was widely used for Rome after John had written the Apocalypse. The Apocalypse was written some 25 or 30 years after Peter had written his Epistle, how, then, could he have used this mystical name for Rome? Furthermore, a mystical name is out of keeping in an Epistle. It would be the only instance in the entire epistolar testimony where a place is camouflaged in this way. The use of a mystical name in an Epistle appears

strained. It therefore must be the literal Babylon in Mesopotamia. And why should this not be? We read in the second chapter of Acts that among those who were in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came to earth were "Parthians, Medes, Elamites and dwellers in Mesopotamia." They heard Peter's testimony and some of them must have been converted. Many Jews dwelt there, and while in 41 A. D. Caligula instituted a persecution against the Jews in Babylon and many left, there was still a large company of them in the fast decaying city.

But the most conclusive evidence against Babylon, meaning Rome, is the complete silence of the Apostle Paul about Peter being in Rome. Paul sent his Epistle to the Roman Church in the year 58 A. D. In that Epistle he greets many believers who were in Rome. If Peter had been there, why did he not mention him also? He went to Rome as a prisoner in the year 61, but there is not a word about meeting Peter in Rome. Finally, when Paul penned his very last Epistle from Rome he makes the significant statement: "Only Luke is with me" (2 Tim. iv:11). This silence about Peter in the Pauline Epistles can only be explained by the fact that Peter was not in Rome at all.

Addressed to Believers in the Dispersion

The Epistle is addressed to the sojourners in the dispersion, that is, to Jewish believers who were scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, provinces in the northeastern part of Asia Minor. Many assemblies had been founded there and there were many believing Jews. They probably had their own gatherings, keeping aloof from the assemblies formed by believing Gentiles. They were the remnant and yet in having believed they were members of the body of Christ.

THE PURPOSE AND MESSAGE OF THE EPISTLE

When Peter wrote this Epistle he fulfilled the request of

the Lord, when he told him "when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." They needed strengthening and comfort for they were passing through all kinds of persecutions; their faith was being severely tested. As believers they were pilgrims and strangers on earth, their portion and calling was different from the unbelieving Jews about them, among whom they suffered. The Lord Jesus Christ who suffered in their behalf is repeatedly presented as a pattern for them in their persecutions, and blessed exhortations are linked with the Person and holy character of our Lord. The Epistle is not doctrinal, though the great doctrines of Christianity are in view throughout the Epistle. It is, like the Epistle of James, a practical Epistle, abounding in exhortations and references to Old Testament history suited to believing Jews in their trials. The keynote is "*Suffering and Glory.*" The words suffering and suffer occur fifteen times and the word glory ten times.

The same error has been taught by some extremists in Biblical interpretation which we have pointed out already in the introduction to the Epistle of James, namely, that it has a Jewish character and does not belong to the Epistles in which the church and the heavenly calling are revealed, and therefore the church should not consider it. This is a most vital mistake. The first Epistle of Peter has an important message also for all believers at all times, to pass it over and not to heed its blessed message, its comfort and exhortations, would mean a very serious loss. A one-sided Bible reading produces a one-sided Christian character and a one-sided Christian service. And there are only too many of such in the church today.

The Divisions of First Peter

As stated in the introduction the keynote of the Epistle is "Suffering and Glory." The end of their pilgrimage, when all suffering ends, will be salvation and the possession of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away. This salvation was the object of inquiry and searching by their own prophets. The Spirit of Christ who was in them testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the Glory that should follow. So they as being His and identified with Him would also have suffering which in due time will be followed by Glory. The Glory comes with His revelation, His appearing, when He comes again.

We divide the Epistle into five sections, but somewhat different from the five chapters into which the Epistle is divided in our Bibles.

I. THE SUFFERING OF BELIEVERS AND EXHORTATION TO HOLY LIVING. i:1-21.

II. THE BLESSINGS AND PRIVILEGES OF ALL BELIEVERS. i:22-ii:10.

III. CHRIST THE PATTERN FOR HIS SAINTS. ii:11-iii:9.

IV. THE COMFORT IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS AND SUFFERING. iii:10-iv.

V. EXHORTATION CONCERNING SERVICE AND CONFLICT. v.

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE SUFFERING OF BELIEVERS AND EXHORTATIONS TO HOLY LIVING.

CHAPTER I:1-21.

1. The Introduction and Doxology. 1-5.
2. Suffering and the coming Glory. 6-9.
3. As revealed in the Prophets. 10-12.
4. Exhortations to Holy Living. 13-21.

1. The Introduction and Doxology: Verses 1-5. As stated in the introduction, Peter writes to believing Jews in the dispersion throughout the provinces mentioned in the first verse. There is at once pointed out a contrast between them as true believers and their former condition. The nation to which they belonged was an elect nation, but they were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." It is something infinitely higher than a national election. Here is an individual election; they were foreknown of God the Father. In the Old Testament the Lord called Israel nationally "my first-born son," but no individual Israelite knew God as his Father, nor did an Israelite know himself individually as a son of God and a member of the family of God. They had received something better. The nation had been set aside while those who believed were brought individually into the family of God, knowing God as their Father, while they became His children. Israel as a nation was set apart externally and by ordinances; but their setting apart, or sanctification, was through the Spirit. Their sanctification was unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Their setting apart was vastly different from that separation which God had accorded to the nation as such. The Holy Spirit had set them apart unto the obedience of Christ, called them to obey as He obeyed, not to an obedience of the law. Connected with this

obedience is the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, that precious blood typified by their former sacrifices which were unable to cleanse from sin, but the blood of Christ assures perfect forgiveness and justification, and that gives confidence and boldness before God, and liberty and power to practice the obedience of Christ, for which the believer is set apart.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His great mercy, hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead." This is the doxology. It declares the new relationship into which they had been brought; for these Jewish believers it is no longer the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." They were begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead. It is a joyful song of the better hope. We may think of what it meant to Peter, as well as to the other disciples. They had believed on Jesus as their promised, national Messiah. Their hope was in Him. As the two said on the way to Emmaus, "we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." They hoped He would be King and take the throne of His father David. Then He who was their hope died on the shameful cross, and hope died. But the third day came and Christ arose from among the dead. Hope revived, yea, they were begotten again unto a living hope. His ressurrection was a begetting again to a living hope, no longer the hope of the earthly kingdom but a living hope "unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that fadeth not away." And this living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead, the hope which centers in Him as the living, risen and glorified One, is the hope of all His people. Israel as a nation possessed an earthly inheritance, the promised land and with it corresponding earthly blessings. But now as the elect, according to the foreknowledge of the Father, they have a better inheritance. Earthly things are corruptible; the heavenly inheritance is incorruptible. Earthly things are defiled, pollution clings to the fairest and choicest; the coming inheritance is undefiled,

nor can it ever be polluted by sin and its curse, it is eternally pure. Here on earth everything is fading, every beautiful flower has its roots in a grave, all is passing and fading away; but that inheritance which we shall receive is never-fading, it is always fresh and beautiful. And this inheritance is "preserved in heaven for you;" it is more than *reserved*, as we have it in our Bibles. It is with Him in the Glory and He preserves it for His Saints, so that the cruel hand of Satan cannot touch it nor take it away from man. And while that inheritance is preserved by the never-failing Lord in Glory, Saints are kept for the inheritance by the power of God through faith. Here is the real perseverance of the Saints; the power to persevere and to keep is not in us but in God. That inheritance is ready to be revealed in the last times, that is when the Lord comes for His Saints.

2. **Suffering and the Coming Glory: Verses 6-9.** The way to the promised land for the literal Israel led through the desert sands with trials and testings. The way of the elect in Christ also leads through the desert with its wilderness experiences; faith too must be honored and glorified by testings. Faith is not only a precious thing for us, it is precious to God as well. It is His gold, that in which He rejoices. To bring out its value various trials are permitted by Him: "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." The goal of the hope, when the inheritance will be bestowed, is the appearing of Jesus Christ. This is His visible appearing. Peter writes as the Apostle of circumcision and he does not write about the church as the body of Christ, the heavenly calling and destiny of the church, and therefore he does not say anything about the rapture preceding the revelation. Peter always speaks of His appearing or revelation; salvation as used in this chapter means the manifestation in glory, when He appears in visible glory and when we shall be manifested with Him in glory. Having mentioned His appearing, the Spirit of God directs the attention at once to the Person of Christ. He

must ever be the object of faith and occupation for the true believer. This brings into view the true character of Christianity.

"Whom having not seen ye love." It is a strange sound and fact at first, but in the end it is precious. Who ever loved a person that he never saw? We know that in human relations it is not so. In Divine things it is precisely what shows the power and special character of a Christian's faith. "Whom having not seen, ye love, in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls." This at once gives us a true and vivid picture of what Christianity is, of signal importance for the Jews to weigh, because they always looked forward for a visible Messiah as an object, the Son of David. But here it is altogether another order of ideas. It is a rejected Messiah who is the proper object of the Christian's love, though he never beheld Him; and who while unseen becomes so much the more simply and unmixedly the object of his faith, and the spring of "joy unspeakable and full of glory."*

3. As Revealed in the Prophets: Verses 10-12. He directs their attention to the Prophets. The Spirit of Christ was in them and they testified before of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow. This is the great message of these holy men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. When our Lord said to the Jews "Search the Scriptures . . . they are they which testify of Me" He called attention to the same fact. They prophesied of the grace which was to come and then they did not understand their own prophecies, they sought diligently, they studied what they had written, searching and always searching, to find out what time, near or far, these things should come to pass. But they knew one thing, "To whom it was revealed, that not to themselves, but to us did they minister the things which are reported to you by those who have preached the Gospel unto you by the

*W. Kelly on Peter.

Holy Spirit sent from heaven, into which things the angels desire to look." They knew that it was not for themselves, nor for their own times, that which the Spirit had announced, but for another time. The passage is illustrated by comparing Isaiah lxiv:4 with 1 Corinthians ii:9-10. The Spirit having come down from heaven after Christ had died and was raised from among the dead, has made known the fullness of redemption. And the angels desire to look into these things, they seek to explore and to fathom the wonders of that redemption and the coming glories which are connected with it.

4. Exhortations to Holy Living: Verses 13-21. The first exhortation is to gird up the loins of the mind. The man who girds the loins of the body is getting ready for service; the girding of the loins of the mind means to set the mind on these things, the things spiritual and unseen. To be sober means to be watchful and temperate, thus walking soberly, and "set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (the correct translation). As they were now "obedient children" in the family of God, their responsibility and calling is to live and act as such. A holy God demands a holy people; this was God's call to His people Israel in the Old Testament, it is His call to the elect in the New Testament (Leviticus xi:44). This necessitates a walk in the Spirit as it is so fully revealed in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians.

Next we find two great reasons for walking in holiness; the first reason is the relationship which believers have as children, God being their Father; the second, the redemption price which was paid.

"And if ye call on Him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourn in fear, knowing that ye were redeemed not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but by precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, the blood of Christ, foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times

for your sake, who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from among the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope might be in God."

He has called us by His Grace and we call Him Father. As Father, the head of His family, to which we belong, He must govern His house. As Father He exercises judgment in government regarding His children; He must chasten His children if they do not walk as it becometh those who are in possession of the divine nature. And though that government is one of love and grace, the Father's dealing with a beloved child, we must pass the time of our sojourn with fear. But this is not a slavish fear, nor a fear which has in it the elements of uncertainty as to salvation, a fear which trembles before a holy God, fearing His wrath. It is a godly, a holy fear, a fear that we might not please Him. This holy fear should be a passion to measure up to our calling as children and not to displease Him who is our Father, so that He does not need to exercise a Father's judgment upon us. While the first reason to walk in holiness has to do with our conscience, the second concerns the affections. That blessed redemption by the blood of Christ, the Lamb without spot and blemish, foreknown before the foundation of the world, is the other great incentive to please God. It is not by silver or gold that He has redeemed us from all the vain things, whether vain religious traditions, or vain manner of life and all that goes with it, but by that which is the dearest, the most blessed and the most precious thing in the eyes of God and to the heart of God—the Blood of Christ. No finite mind can understand the price God paid for our redemption. By Him we believe in God, who raised Him from among the dead and gave Him glory. And that acquired Glory He received He has given to His own (John xvii:21).

II. THE BLESSINGS AND PRIVILEGES OF ALL BELIEVERS

CHAPTER I:22: II:10.

1. The New Birth. Verses 22-25.
2. Spiritual Growth. ii:1-3.
3. The Privileges of Believers as the holy and royal Priesthood. 4-10.

I. The New Birth: Chapter i:22-25. The relationship of those who are thus redeemed, whose faith and hope is in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, whose souls are purified by obedience to the truth, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, is stated first: "Love one another with a pure heart fervently." All the elect through the foreknowledge of God the Father are covered by the same love, are redeemed by the same Lamb, washed in the same precious blood, have the same Father. They are one; they are brethren and as such love must characterize them. But this love, loving one another out of a pure heart fervently, is the fruit of the new nature which all possess who have believed and are redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." The Word of God, living and abiding, under the operation of the Spirit (the Word is "the water" of which our Lord spoke to Nicodemus) is the agent of the new birth. It is not corruptible seed, but incorruptible, hence the nature is an incorruptible, a holy nature. There are three incorruptible things mentioned in this chapter. An incorruptible inheritance, an incorruptible redemption price, and an incorruptible seed giving an incorruptible nature. And that new nature must love that which is of God, therefore the exhortation of loving one another, which is more fully developed in the great "family Epistle," the first Epistle of John.

But the new birth carries with it another blessing. "For all flesh is as grass and all the glory of it as the flower of the grass. The grass hath withered and the flower fallen, but

the Word of the Lord endureth forever, and this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you."

The old creation is left behind, the world with all its glory and boastings, is judged. All is as grass and the glory of man as the flower of the grass. Those born again do no longer belong to this world, as He prayed: "They are not of the world, as I am not of the world." The words concerning the grass and the flower of the grass are a quotation from Isaiah (Isa. xl:6, 8). But the quotation is changed a little. In Isaiah we read: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth," and here it is, "The grass hath withered and the flower fallen," that is how faith must look upon the world and all its glory, as withered and fallen, with no more attraction for the heart which knows God. But those who are born again are linked with that which abideth for ever, the Word of the Lord, preached in that ever blessed Gospel.

2. Spiritual Growth: ii:1-3. "Wherefore, laying aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings and all evil-speakings as new born babes desire earnestly the pure milk of the Word that ye may grow by it unto salvation, if ye have tasted that the Lord is good."

Those who are born again of incorruptible seed, in possession of a new nature, are still in the world, though they are no longer of it. Evil is on all sides and there is still the old nature, the flesh, in every child of God though believers are reckoned as being no longer in the flesh (Rom. viii:9). The old things of the flesh must be put off, completely laid aside. This is the necessary thing for spiritual growth; if there is no putting off of these there can be no progress. Peter speaks of believers as "new-born babes." The sense in which this expression is used here differs from the use of it in 1 Corinthians iii:1: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." The spiritual growth of the Corinthians had been arrested and dwarfed; they never developed, but remained babes, a spiritual monstrosity. But the meaning here is entirely different. Believers should be at all times like new-born babes hungering for that which

the Lord has provided for spiritual growth, the milk in all its purity as found in His Word. The mother by which we are begotten again, that is the living and abiding Word of God, has also the nourishment for the life we have received. In this sense the child of God must always be like a healthy babe, always craving, hungering and thirsting for the pure milk as provided in His Word. All that we need, yea, every need is provided there, and as we go to that fountain which never runs dry, which never fails nor disappoints, we shall grow thereby. One of the most subtle delusions is found among some pentecostal sects, who imagine that they are so filled with the Spirit that they can dispense with the reading of and feeding on the Word. In the authorized version two words are missing which belong in the text; they are the words "*unto salvation*" . . . "that ye may grow thereby unto salvation." They were omitted in some manuscripts, but belong here. Salvation here has the same meaning as in the first chapter, it looks forward to the end in glory.

And if we have felt that the Lord is gracious, have tasted of His loving kindness, we shall desire more and more of it, crave for still more. Peter surely had tasted that the Lord is gracious. We think of his denial, and when the Lord turned and looked upon him, Peter went out and wept bitterly. He had tasted that the Lord is gracious, and more so, when the Lord dealt so graciously with him at the meal His blessed hands had prepared for His disciples on the lake-shore (John xxi), and His loving voice asked: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?" The sentence "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" is a quotation from the Psalms (Psalm xxxiv:8). David, like Peter, had shamefully failed and like Peter he had tasted that the Lord is gracious. All His saints have had the same experience of the graciousness of the Lord.

3. The Privileges of Believers: Verses 4-10. The testimony of Peter which follows is of great importance. The fisherman of Galilee knew nothing of what would happen centuries later. He did not know that ritualism would

exalt him to a position of supremacy, claiming that he was and is the rock upon which the church is built, that he was a Bishop who communicated in Rome his apostolic authority to another, as it is claimed to one by name of Linus, and Linus handed over the same authority to Cletus and Cletus to Clemens, Clemens to Anacletus, Anacletus to Sixtus and so on from one generation to the other, each adding a little more till the harlot system of the mystical Babylon, the papacy became what it is today. But while Peter did not know the future, the Holy Spirit knew and He inspired his pen to write that which is the complete refutation of popery and a man-made priesthood.

Not Peter is the living Stone upon which everything rests, but the Lord Jesus Christ is the rock foundation, the Stone upon whom all is built. Not Peter was rejected by men, then chosen of God and precious, but it is the Lord Jesus Christ. The Scriptures had announced this fact beforehand. Isaiah xxviii:16 is quoted in Verse 6. This is followed by a quotation from Psalm cxviii:22 and Isaiah viii:14. The Lord Jesus while on earth had made use of these prophecies given by His Spirit (Matthew xxiv:42). The Holy Spirit after Pentecost reminded the rulers, elders and scribes of the people once more of this great prophecy concerning the rejection of the Messiah by the nation (Acts iv:9-12). And when the Lord Jesus quoted this prophecy from Psalm cxviii He added, what is cited here in Verse 8, "whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken," that is what happened to the nation Israel. The second half of this statement of our Lord in Matthew xxi:44 is still unaccomplished—"but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." This will happen at the close of the Times of the Gentiles, when the stone strikes the feet of the prophetic image (Dan. ii). Israel had rejected the Stone and therefore was unfit as a nation to build the spiritual house, as the Lord had likewise announced: "the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof." They had as a nation a house called "The House of the Lord," where He delighted to dwell, but it was not a

spiritual house, but a house made with hands, a shadow of the better things to come. When Israel rejected the Messiah and the kingdom He had offered, when they had delivered Him up and He died, after His resurrection from among the dead and His exaltation to the right hand of God, the third person of the trinity, the Holy Spirit, came to earth for the purpose of building amongst men the habitation of God, a spiritual house, and that house is the church. Thus Peter bears witness to Christ as the living Stone, the rock upon which the church "the spiritual house" is being built. He with all other believers, including ourselves, are the living stones. As mentioned in the introduction, Christ is the *Petra, the rock*, Peter and every other child of God is a *Petros*, a little rock, a living stone with Himself (Matt. xvi:17-18). And His Son whom man dishonored and rejected is precious to God; He is His delight; He is precious to those who have believed; He is our delight. While God says that His delight is in Him, we too confess that all our delight is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, all believers constitute a holy Priesthood. Peter does not claim an exclusive Priesthood vested in him, but His inspired testimony is that all members of the body of Christ, the living stones, are a priesthood. In the Old Testament the Priesthood of Christ was foreshadowed in Aaron and the Priesthood of believers by the sons of Aaron. (See Annotations in Leviticus.) No longer are needed sacrifices of animals, for He has brought the one sacrifice, by which He has made the new and living way by His blood into the Holiest, so that every believer can draw nigh with a true heart and full assurance of faith, with hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews x:19-22). This completely disposes of the ritualistic priesthood, vested in "ordained" men, that system which has been and still is and always will be, the corruption of Christianity. It also answers the blasphemous mass, which is an act of idolatry.

The function of the holy priesthood of believers consists in bringing spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus

Christ. "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name" (Hebrews xiii:15). It is worship in the Spirit and Truth; it is praise and adoration as well as the ministry of intercession.

Once more Peter mentions the fact of the Christian Priesthood. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the excellencies of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (Hosea ii:23). Israel was chosen, Israel was called to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, they were called "to shew forth His praises." They never attained it, because they were not a holy nation, though constituted a separated nation by God's calling. But these believing Jews through grace in Christ had become a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. As a remnant of the nation they possessed now what the nation never possessed. Of course that remnant was embodied in the church, and is a part of the body of Christ. Yet the application to them as a remnant must not be lost sight of. Nor must we forget that there will be a future remnant of the nation, the nation which is now dispersed, which will become a holy nation, a royal priesthood in connection with the other nations. The promises, the gifts and callings of God, will all be accomplished, and those who had not obtained mercy will yet obtain mercy; that will be when He whom they pierced comes again and when they shall look upon Him in that day. Apart from this application to them as believing Jews, to whom the Epistle was addressed, all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, have a royal Priesthood. Christ is a holy Priest and a royal Priest; both aspects of His Priesthood believers share in Him. We are holy priests to go in to God to represent man before God; we are royal priests to represent God before man, to shew forth His excellencies. The royal Priesthood of Christ, is the Priesthood after the order

of Melchisedec. He was the King-Priest who came to Abraham and made known God and His Glory to Abraham. Thus in Christ we behold the Glory of God and as identified with Christ, indwelt by Him, our royal Priesthood is to make Him and His excellencies known among men.

III. CHRIST THE PATTERN FOR HIS SAINTS

CHAPTER II:11-III:9.

1. Abstinence and Submission. ii:11-17.
2. Christ the Pattern for those who suffer. 18-25.
3. Glorifying Christ in the Marriage relation. iii:1-7.
4. True Christian Character. 8-9.

1. Abstinence and Submission: Chapter ii:11-17. The first exhortation is addressed to them as strangers and pilgrims. Such all true believers are. Because we belong to a heavenly home we cannot be at home in a world which lieth in the wicked one, which has cast out the Lord of Glory, and which continues to reject Him. And it is only as a stranger here that we can do what we are exhorted to do, "to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." If our heart is where He is, if our affections are set upon the things on high, if we lose sight of the "vain things" which charm the natural man, and we realize in faith the heavenly calling and the heavenly home, then we shall not fight the lusts of the flesh, but willingly and joyfully abstain from them, fleeing them, as Paul exhorted Timothy.

A general exhortation follows. Their conversation is to be honest among the Gentiles who often spoke of them as evil-doers, accusing Christians of their own shameful conduct, as unsaved Gentiles, so that it might bring reproach upon "that worthy Name." By their godly lives the Gentiles should see their good works and when the day of visitation came, they would then glorify God. Does this mean a visitation in judgment, or the visitation in Grace? It means the latter, though a visitation by the chastening hand of God is not excluded. When sorrows come, when earthly hopes are blasted, when sickness makes the enjoyment of the

material things impossible, then the unbelievers often turn to the people of God for help and comfort, the grace of God will then be manifested in the day of visitation; this glorifies God.

Exhortation to submission is linked with this. "Submit yourselves therefore to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether unto the king as supreme; or to governors as sent by Him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." We must remember that the kings and rulers mentioned here, under whom these believing Jews lived, were heathen and idolators. Yet they were to obey and to mainfest patient submission. The exhortation has a special meaning for them as Jews, for naturally they were a rebellious people. The exhortation given to them before their captivity in Babylon, "to seek the peace of the city" where they would dwell has generally been disobeyed. These believing Jews probably were tempted to resist the powers which ruled.* Therefore the exhortation to submit for the Lord's sake, though there are limitations to such submission. Such submission is "the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." Brief, but weighty, exhortations follow.

2. Christ the Pattern for Those Who Suffer: Verses 18-25. The exhortation after that is addressed to the servants, that is, to those Jewish believers who were slaves. To such the choicest words are addressed, God knowing that His own beloved Son had been on earth as a servant, that He was here not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give His life as a ransom for many. They were in the blessed position to "follow His steps." But the exhortation does not mean servants or slaves exclusively, it is written for all

*It is a significant fact that many of the radicals, anarchists, or as they used to be called in Russia, nihilists, are apostate Jews. Many of the persecutions of the Jews, in which the innocent have to suffer with the guilty, are produced by Jews meddling with the politics of the nations among whom they are strangers and trying to overthrow these governments.

believers. "For this is acceptable, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it if, when ye sin, and are buffeted for it, ye take it patiently? but if, when ye do well and suffer, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." To suffer wrongfully and take it patiently, without murmuring and without strife, is whereunto believers are called. It is then that they can show forth His excellencies and follow after Him. "Because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that ye should follow His steps." And what an example has He left for us? He was the holy, spotless Son of God. Suffering for His own sins was an impossibility, for He was spotless. He knew no sin, neither could He sin. Yet He suffered. "Who did no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth; who when reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not; but committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously." Such is the pattern. But there is more than that. He knew no sin, did not sin and all His suffering, the shame and the suffering connected with the cross, was on account of our sins. "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." The rendering, or, rather, paraphrase, some have adopted that Christ bore our sins "up to the tree" is erroneous and misleading. Our Lord did not bear our sins in His holy life before the cross, but He bore them on the cross, in His own body. And He bore them that "we, being dead to sins," not as revealed in Romans to *sin*, but to sins, that is, the practical giving up of our own wills, should live unto righteousness. The Fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is used by Peter in this paragraph. There it is written: "By His stripes we are healed," and the confession, "all we like sheep have gone astray." Of late the so-called "divine healers," men and women who claim gifts of healings, if not gifts to work miracles, speak of the sentence, "By His stripes we are healed," as meaning the healing of diseases. They claim that

Christ died also for our bodily ills and that the stripes laid upon Him were specifically for the healing of our bodies, which Scripture so clearly states are "dead on account of sin." This is a most dangerous perversion of the truth. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, but nowhere is it written that He died for our bodily diseases.

These believing Jews were in possession of the truth as revealed in Isaiah liii. They foreshadow that other Jewish remnant of the future which will some day use the Fifty-third chapter of Isaiah as their great confession of Him whom they despised and rejected, and by whose stripes they also will be healed. Then Peter speaks of our Lord as Shepherd, the Shepherd who died for the sheep, the great Shepherd brought again from among the dead. He loves His sheep and shepherds them. Bishop means overseer. He is the only Bishop, who watches over all and guards all His blood-bought sheep.

3. Glorifying Christ in the Marriage Relation: iii:1-7. The practical exhortations are now extended to the marriage relation, how wives and husbands should be royal priests, showing forth His excellencies in their divinely sanctioned union, as man and wife. The wife is mentioned first, for her place is the highest, the place of submission, which in God's eyes is the place of honor. The case of a wife is stated who has an unbelieving husband. Is she to submit to him, who is an unbeliever? Must she be obedient to such a one? How often wives placed in this position have listened to the evil councils of others, and, instead of submitting to the demands of an unbelieving husband, have resisted him, and as a result misery came upon them. Let it be noticed that the Holy Spirit insists on obedience; the fact of the disobedient husband is given as a reason for submission. Then there is a promise. The unbelieving husband is to be won without the Word, that is, without preaching in a public service, by the godly life of meekness and submission of the believing wife. This is the advice of the Holy Spirit, and many times the promise given to the believing wife has been made good.

Furthermore, there is a word concerning dress. The adorning is not to be outwardly in braiding of hair, wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel, but inwardly, "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price." The positive side is emphasized more than the negative. The greatest ornament a woman can wear is "a meek and quiet spirit," for it shows that in manifesting meekness and quietness, they learned and received from Him, who on earth was "meek and lowly of heart." This applies to every believer likewise. Wherever a meek and quiet spirit is manifested God is well pleased with it. What a contrast with the conditions in the world today. Women claim equality with men; in every walk of life they clamor to be heard; the female sex is breaking down the barriers set by the Creator and the Redeemer, demanding leadership in every sphere. The result will be disaster. But it must not be overlooked that here is also exhortation for the Christian woman to dress outwardly as becomes a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. There should be a difference between the daughters of the world and those who are Christ's. On the other hand, shabbiness of dress, an unclean appearance, is no more an honor to the Gospel, than a dress which is after the latest fashion of the world.

And the husband is exhorted next. He is not told to claim submission, or to insist upon it as his peculiar right. He is exhorted to give the wife honor as the weaker vessel, hence he must show to her, as the weaker one, kindness, tenderness, consideration and loving sympathy, as we read in Ephesians: "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church." The believing husband and the wife are "heirs together of the grace of life." Where this is practised there will be sweet companionship and fellowship in the Lord, nothing hindering them from bowing the knees together in His presence, expressing together their praise, their mutual needs and those of others.

4. True Christian Character: Verses 8-9. General ex-

hortations follow. What is found in these two verses constitutes a true Christian character.

IV. THE COMFORT IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS AND SUFFERING

CHAPTER III:10-IV.

1. The Comfort in Suffering. Verse 10-17.
2. Few saved as illustrated by Noah's Preaching. 18-22.
3. The new life in its transforming Power. iv:1-11.
4. Suffering and Glory. 12-19.

1. The Comfort in Suffering: Verses 10-17. The words which stand in the beginning of this section are quoted from Psalm xxxiv:12-16. It is interesting to note that the Spirit of God quotes from the three main divisions of the Hebrew Bible in the first three chapters of this Epistle. The Hebrew Bible is composed according to Jewish division of the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. In the first chapter the Law is quoted; in the second the Prophets; and in the third we have a quotation from the Psalms. If we practice righteousness, the result of the new nature, produced by the new life, the promises of the Lord will not fail. To Israel in the Old Testament the Lord promised earthly blessings, and while to His heavenly people heavenly, spiritual blessings are vouchsafed, the earthly blessings are not excluded. It was true in olden times that "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers." It is so today, for He changes not. He looks for practical righteousness. Equally true is it that in His righteous government the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And there is the comfort if we do right that none can harm us, for the Lord is on our side.

Suffering for righteousness' sake must be, but there is a "blessedness" connected with it. The Lord pronounced this in one of the beatitudes of the sermon on the mount (Matt. v:10). How fitting it is that in this Epistle, in addressing these Jewish believers as a remnant of the nation, this should be mentioned. It is the comfort in persecution,

"be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled." The quotation in verse 15 is from Isaiah viii:12, 13. There it is a prophecy concerning the future remnant of Israel during their coming great tribulation, foreshadowed in Isaiah by the Assyrian invasion.

2. Few Saved, as Illustrated by Noah's Preaching: Verses 18-22. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in flesh but quickened by the Spirit: in which also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who before time were disobedient when the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing; in which few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water; which figure does also now save you, even baptism (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the request as before God of a good conscience), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being subjected unto Him."

This difficult and much misunderstood passage demands a closer attention. It is the passage upon which Rome has built her obnoxious and unscriptural doctrine of a purgatory. Protestant expositors have also misinterpreted this passage; in some quarters of "Protestantism" a kind of a "Protestant purgatory" is now being taught. Many errors, like a second probation, another chance for the lost, the restitution of the wicked, are linked with the wrong exposition of the above words. Even sound believers have adopted that which Peter does not mean at all, and which is unknown in the rest of the Word of God. Their teaching founded upon these statements by Peter is as follows: The Lord descended into Hades, the place of the departed spirits and preached there. The visit took place after His death and before His physical resurrection, that is, He made the visit in His unclothed state, while His body still rested in the tomb. As to the preaching, the opinions of these exegetes are divided. Some believe that He went to Hades to announce the certain doom of the lost. Others state, and they

are not a few, that He preached, offering to the lost salvation, while still others claim that the spirits in prison are the righteous dead to whom Christ announced that their redemption had been wrought out for them, and that He announced His victory. As to the result of the preaching, the teaching is that it was successful; this is by inference, as they say, otherwise it could not be mentioned among the blessed results of Christ's suffering. They also claim that inasmuch as early Christian literature has much to say about that fictitious "Descent into Hades" (or, as generally stated, hell), it must be the true meaning of the passage. In giving these views on the meaning of the passage before us we give a very few; there are many others, like the late Bullinger's view, that the spirits were the fallen angels, and that He went to herald His triumph to them. Pages could be filled with the fanciful and unscriptural interpretations of this passage.

The chief question is: Did our Lord go to Hades in a disembodied state? In fact, all depends on the question of what is the true meaning of the sentence "quickened by the Spirit." Now, according to the interpretations of the men who teach that the Lord visited Hades, the spirits in prison, during the interval between His death and the morning of the third day, He descended into these regions while His dead body was still in the grave. Therefore, these teachers claim that His human spirit was quickened, which necessitates that the spirit which the dying Christ commended into the Father's hands had also died. This is not only incorrect doctrine, but is is an unsound and evil doctrine. Was the holy humanity of our Lord, body, soul and spirit dead? A thousand times *No!* Only His body died; that is the only part of Him which could die. The text makes this clear: "He was put to death in flesh," that is, His body. There could be no quickening of His spirit, for His spirit was alive. Furthermore, the word quickening, as we learn from Ephesians i:20 and ii:5-6, by comparing the two passages, applies to His physical resurrection, it is the quickening of His body. To teach that the Lord Jesus was made alive before His

resurrection is unscriptural. The "quickened by the Spirit" means the raising up of His body. His human spirit needed no quickening; it was His body and *only* His body. And the Spirit who did the quickening is not His own spirit, that is, His human spirit, but the Holy Spirit. Romans viii:12 speaks of the Spirit as raising Jesus from among the dead. We have shown that it was an impossibility that Christ was in any way quickened while His body was not yet raised, hence a visit to Hades is positively excluded between His death and resurrection. There is only another alternative. If it is true that He descended into these regions, then it must have been after His resurrection. But that is equally untenable. The so-called "Apostle's creed" puts the descent between His death and resurrection and all the other theorists follow this view. We have shown what the passage *does not* mean. It cannot mean a visit of the disembodied Christ to Hades, for it speaks of the quickening by the Spirit, and that means His physical resurrection.

What, then, does the passage mean? It is very simple after all. He preached by the Spirit, or in the Spirit, that is, the same Spirit who raised Him from among the dead, the Holy Spirit of Life and Power, to the spirits who are *now* in prison. But when the preaching occurred they were not in prison. And who were they? All the wicked dead for 4,000 years? The text makes it clear that they are a special class of people. They were living in the days of Noah. It is incomprehensible how some of these teachers, misinterpreting this passage, can teach that it includes all the lost, or angels which fell, or the righteous dead. The Spirit of God preached to them, that is, the Spirit who quickened the Body of Christ, the same Spirit preached to the generation of unbelievers in the days of Noah. The time of the preaching, then, did not occur between the death and resurrection of Christ, but it took place in Noah's day. Christ was not personally, or corporeally present, just as He is not present in person in this age when the Gospel is preached; His Spirit is here. So was He present by His Spirit in the days of Noah. It is written: "My Spirit shall not always

strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years" (Gen. vi:3). His Spirit was then on the earth. In long-suffering God was waiting for one hundred and twenty years while the ark was preparing. His Spirit preached then. But He needed an instrument. The instrument was Noah; in him was the Spirit of Christ and as the preacher of righteousness (2 Peter ii:5) he delivered the warning message of an impending judgment to those about him, who did not heed the message, passed on in disobedience, were swept away by the deluge and are now the spirits in prison. As the Spirit of Christ was in the prophets (chapter i:11) testifying beforehand of the suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow, so the Spirit of Christ preached through Noah. This is the meaning of this passage, and any other is faulty and unscriptural.

This interpretation is in full keeping with Peter's testimony. It is to "strengthen his brethren," to encourage and comfort those who were suffering persecution and passed through many fiery trials. They thought it strange that they had to suffer, that they were few in number who were saved, while they lived in the midst of the vast multitudes which rejected the Gospel and live on in sin and disobedience. For this reason the Spirit of God reminds them that such was also the case in the days of Noah, as it will be again at the close of the age, as the Lord Himself had announced. The multitudes in the days of Noah despised the warning; only eight souls were saved out of the judgment.

It must also be remembered that Peter's Epistle is not a doctrinal Epistle. He does not teach, but exhort. It is true many of the exhortations have for a foundation doctrines stated elsewhere in the Pauline Epistles. If it were Christian doctrine that Christ went to the prison of the wicked dead, such a doctrine should then be more fully stated somewhere else in the New Testament. But such is not the case. The passage in Ephesians iv, concerning Christ leading captivity captive has nothing to do with Peter's statement. (See annotations on Ephesians iv.)

The concluding words, linked with this statement, are

a typical comparison of the deluge and the ark with baptism. It has also been misunderstood, and some teach on account of it that baptism is a saving ordinance, which is another error. We quote a paragraph from the "Synopsis of the Bible" which clears this up in a way which cannot be improved upon.

"To this the apostle adds, the comparison of baptism to the ark of Noah in the deluge. Noah was saved through the water; we also; for the water of baptism typifies death, as the deluge, so to speak, was the death of the world. Now Christ has passed through death and is risen. We enter into death in baptism; but it is like the ark, because Christ suffered in death for us, and has come out of it in resurrection, as Noah came out of the deluge, to begin, as it were, a new life in a resurrection world. Now Christ, having passed through death, has atoned for sins; and we, by passing through it in spirit, leave all our sins in it, as Christ did in reality for us; for He was raised up without the sins which He expiated on the cross. And they were our sins; and thus, through the resurrection, we have a good conscience. We pass through death in spirit and in figure by baptism. The peace-giving force of the thing is the resurrection of Christ, after He had accomplished expiation; by which resurrection therefore we have a good conscience."

In other words our good conscience is not in having obeyed an ordinance, but it is by what Christ has done, who has gone into heaven and who is exalted at the right hand of God.

3. The New Life in its Transforming Power: iv:1-11. The opening sentence of the fourth chapter connects with chapter iii:18. The sufferings of Christ are thus brought to their attention once more. The reason is obvious. They were Jews and had been taught that earthly, temporal blessings, were the marks exclusively of divine favor; trials, sufferings and persecutions, on the other hand, according to Jewish conceptions, were evidences of disfavor. They were therefore disheartened and greatly perplexed when persecutions arose and they had to suffer. But these sufferings were the evidence that they followed Him who also suffered

in the flesh. He suffered for us, that is for our sins, and therefore believers must arm themselves with the same mind. They must expect suffering, not for sins, but from the side of an evil world. "For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." The death of Christ for sin (not sins) demands from the believer that he also cease from sin, from living after the old nature. If the Christian gratifies the old nature and yields to it, it will not entail any suffering, but if the believer lives as "dead unto sin," walks in separation from this evil age, the result will be that he has to suffer in some way. The life he lives is no longer "in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." Such a walk brings with it the contradiction of sinners, the hatred of the world, such sufferings through which Christ also passed. Once they did as the heathen, the Gentiles, about them, walking in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banqueting, and abominable idolatries. But now their lives had been transformed; no longer did they run with them and do what the Gentiles did. Their former associates in sin and in the lusts of the flesh thought it strange that such should be the case, and they spoke evil of them. What evil they spoke about them is not stated. But for this they will have to give account to Him who is ready to judge the quick and the dead, even Christ.

The next verse has perplexed many, and has been misused by teachers of error and unsound doctrines, like the passage about the spirits in prison. "For to this end was the Gospel preached also to the dead, that they might be judged as regards men after the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit." It is strange that expositors should detach a verse like this from the context and then, without considering its connection, build upon one verse a new and vital doctrine. So it is claimed that the dead mentioned are those who died before the Gospel was preached, or who never had a chance to hear the Gospel, but who hear it now in the abode of death, to obtain eternal life. But this is only one of a number of other interpretations.

The Apostle had spoken in the preceding verse of the

judgment of the living and of the dead. He now mentions the dead to whom the Gospel had been preached. It is a thing of the past and means that those who are dead now while they lived had heard the preaching of the Gospel. He means only the righteous dead and the other dead are not in view at all. Those who are now dead passed through the same experience, as the living pass through it, judged according to men in the flesh, but living according to God in the Spirit. Thus the preaching to the dead as dead is not taught at all in this verse. If there were such a thing as preaching to the physical dead we should find it in the Epistle to the Romans, in that great document of the Gospel, or somewhere else in the Pauline Epistle; but there is nothing mentioned about this anywhere.

The new life which is dead to sin and suffers with Christ must be manifested. Of this we read in the exhortations which follow (verses 7-11). The end of all things is at hand, the fact that this age will end must always be kept before the heart and mind. And if it was true then that the promised end is at hand how much more true is it now. As a result of waiting for His Coming, expecting Him at any time, we are to be sober and watchful unto prayer, and manifest fervent love among and towards fellow-believers. There is to be hospitality without murmuring, ministering one to another, according as each has received. Public ministry in preaching or teaching is to be as the Oracles of God, in dependence upon Him, as of the ability which God supplieth, that is,as enabled by His Spirit.

4. **Suffering and Glory: Verses 12-19.** "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which cometh upon you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." With what love and tenderness, dear Peter, by the Spirit of God, touches again on their sufferings and trials! How perplexed they must have been when they read their own Scriptures and remembered the promises made to Israel as to earthly blessings; and here they were suffering

want and privation, were persecuted and slandered by those about them. He writes to them not to think it strange, as if a strange thing happened unto them, when passing through fiery trials. It is the path the Shepherd went and the sheep must follow Him. He suffered, it is the believer's privilege to suffer with Him. When sufferings and trials come, then is the time for rejoicing and not for being disheartened. Sufferings become sweet and precious when we remember they constitute us partakers of Christ's sufferings. And there is coming a revelation of His glory. In anticipation of that we can rejoice, for that revelation will bring the end of all suffering, and glory as well.

"If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye, for the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified." Instead of trying to escape sufferings with Christ, a little reproach, a little contempt for Christ's sake, we should welcome all most gladly. There is a blessing in it, even when people call us narrow or by any other name of contempt, because we exalt Christ and are true to Him. The Spirit of Glory and of God rests upon us whenever we are reproached for the name of Christ. And if we were but more faithful, more separated, more loyal and devoted, we also would have more reproach, and as a result know more of the blessed experience that we are the resting and dwelling place of the Spirit of glory.

But there are sufferings which are inconsistent with Christ's sufferings and with the character of a Christian. "But if any suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." It means to count reproach and suffering for Christ an honor and a glory. Peter had made this experience when with his fellow-apostles he had been beaten, "they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts v:41).

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the

righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" The sufferings of believers are permitted by the Lord for their own good likewise; they are His loving chastenings. Thus He deals as a loving Father with His house, whose house are we (Hebrews iii:6), permitting and using afflictions, sorrows, losses, that we may be partakers of His holiness. But if such is the case with His house, with those who belong to Him and whom He loves, what shall be the end of those that disobey the Gospel of God? If the righteous, the sinner saved by grace, in his walk through the wilderness can scarcely be saved, if it needs the very power of God to keep him, what shall be the fate of the ungodly and the sinner? Therefore, when the believer suffers he commits his soul to Him who is able to sustain and carry him through.

1. EXHORTATIONS CONCERNING SERVICE AND CONFLICT

CHAPTER V.

1. As to Christian Service. 1-7.
2. Conflict and Victory. 8-14.
3. The Conclusion. 12-14.

1. As to Christian Service: Verses 1-7. Peter now speaks in great tenderness exhorting to service. The exhortation is addressed to the elders and he speaks of himself as a "fellow-elder." Does he mean by this an official title or does he mean simply his age and experience? He is not writing in any official capacity, but the word elder has the meaning of old in years. He assumes no ecclesiastical authority to dictate, but speaks out of a ripe experience and a heart of love. How different from what ritualism has made him to be. He takes his place among the other elders and calls himself a fellow-elder, not claiming any authority or superiority whatever. He was a witness of the sufferings of Christ; he knew he would be a partaker of the glory which shall be revealed. The Lord had given him this assurance. (Matt. xix:28, 29).

He gives some important exhortations. We give it in a better rendering. "Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but readily; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but being ensamples to the flock." Believers here are called "the flock of God." In John x:16 the Lord had given the announcement that there should be one flock (not one fold, as the authorized version). The flock of God is the church, the body of Christ. The language so frequently heard in Christendom when preachers and pastors speak of those to whom they preach as "my flock" or "my people," is unscriptural and should be avoided. God's children do not belong to anybody but the Lord. As the Lord had commissioned Peter: "Feed my sheep" and "Feed my lambs," so Peter writes to the elders to tend the flock of God. It is the same Greek word used here which we find in John xxi:16 and is really "shepherd"—shepherd the flock of God. It is not to be done for filthy lucre's sake, on account of gain, for money considerations. All is prophetic, for exactly that which was not to be done is being done in Christendom today, hence many of those who claim to be shepherds of the flock are in reality nothing but hirelings; and often it happens that the hireling for the sake of better financial conditions will exchange "his flock" for another. Furthermore, there is to be no lording over the allotted charge (or over your allotments). The elder who has the oversight of the flock, called to shepherd the flock, minister to the flock as a servant, is not to take a place of superiority or spiritual dignity, claiming authority. This also is done in Christendom with its "Lord Bishops" and other titles of ecclesiastical authority. The word translated in the authorized version with "heritage" is in the Greek "*Kleros*", and means an allotment. From this word comes our English "Clergy." There is no such thing in the body of Christ as a "Clergy" and a "Laity."

Instead of lording over their allotted charge, the elders are to be ensamples to the flock, in a godly life. Then comes the promise, "when the chief shepherd is manifested, ye

shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." The sheep of Christ for which He laid down His life are very precious to Him, and those who serve His sheep, who minister to their need, will be honored by Him and rewarded with the crown of glory in the day of His manifestation. There is to be submission by the younger to the elder, that is, the younger in years are to be subject to those older in years. The same rule of loving submission extends to all the flock of God, "be subject one to another." Humility is to be the right clothing for the saints of God. "They are to gird themselves with humility in this way, humility being that which will keep everything rightly adjusted, as the girdle the robe, and which would thus enable for such activity as all are called to; for humility is a grand help against discouragement by the difficulties of the way, and necessarily against all that would search out any remnant of pride in us."* Self-exaltation is the very essence of sin. God cannot tolerate it in His people. The example of Christ, who made of Himself no reputation, forbids it. God resisteth therefore always and in every way the proud, while He giveth grace to the humble. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." How little these great exhortations are considered in our times! Even among those who have the truth and believe in the revelation of God, while there is much increase in knowledge, there is little evidence of true humility. Humility will never leave us ashamed. We do not need to exalt ourselves; the Lord will do it for us.

Then there is the sweet comfort: "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." All means all—all cares, whatever they are; all burdens, all anxieties we can roll upon Him, with the perfect assurance that He does care. Alas! our anxieties, our heavy feelings, our worry and our hurry, all speak the same language of unbelief "Lord, doest Thou not care?" Well, it is if we look upon all burdens He permits to be laid upon us, as tokens of His love, by which

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*F. W. Grant.

we may learn His faithfulness afresh. Instead of murmuring then, we should sing and rejoice, being anxious for nothing, knowing He carries us and our burdens and cares as we can never do.

2. Conflict and Victory: Verses 8-11. Once more we hear His exhortation: "Be sober, be watchful!" Why? Because there is an adversary and a conflict. In those days of persecution he was the roaring lion; in our days he sneaks about as an angel of light. No longer is it the persecution of the church; it is the corruption of the Truth which is the work of the adversary today. But in Peter's day the enemy was engaged in active persecution, seeking to devour God's people. Once more he will assume this character during the coming great tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble. Then the faithful Jewish remnant, like this remnant to whom Peter wrote, will have to face the roaring lion, as we read so frequently in the Book of Revelation.

Then follows Peter's benediction, quite a different thing from the fraudulent benedictions, which come from the counterfeit successors of Peter: "But the God of all grace, who hath called you unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, when ye have suffered a little while, Himself shall perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle you. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

3. The Conclusion: Verses 12-14. The Epistle was sent to them by Silvanus. It is the same Silvanus whose back had been lacerated in the prison of Philippi, whose feet had been in stocks, and who sang the praises of the Lord with beloved Paul in that night of pain and suffering. He knew what suffering with Christ meant and could equally sympathize with his brethren.

There is greeting from the other elect ones in Babylon, as we have shown in our introduction, in literal Babylon on the banks of the Euphrates. Salutation from Marcus is also given. This is John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, whose failure in the Book of Acts is recorded, and on account of whom the Apostle Paul had a falling out with Barnabas;

it is the same Mark who wrote the Gospel which bears his name. The kiss of love is mentioned (Rom. xvi:16; 1 Cor. xvi:20; 2 Cor. xiii:12; 1 Thess. v:26). It was universally observed for centuries. "Peace be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen."

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

The Second Epistle of Peter

Introduction

The authenticity of this second Epistle of Peter has occasioned a great deal of controversy and many are questioning it, as it has been done in the past. It is true the most ancient sources of post-apostolic writings do not mention this Epistle. What we have pointed out in the introductions of most of the other New Testament books, that their authenticity is confirmed by references in the fragments of the writings of the church fathers, such as Polycarp, Papias, Clement of Rome and others, cannot be done with this Epistle. Some scholars in their research claim that traces of this Epistle are discernable in the testimonies of Polycarp, Ignatius, in the letter of Barnabas and in the testimony of Clement of Rome, but they are so very faint and fanciful, that they are not reliable. But not finding a direct allusion in these sources does not mean anything at all. The greater portion of the writings of the men who were in touch with the Apostles and the direct disciples of the men who knew Peter and Paul, have been lost. If we had all they have written we would probably find in them references to this Epistle.

The Epistle is not found in the Peshito version. According to Bishop Westcott in his Canon of the New Testament there are in existence two classes of manuscripts of this version. Both omit the second and third Epistles of John, the second Epistle of Peter, the Epistle of Jude and the Book of Revelation, but include all the other books. This Canon seems to have been generally maintained in the Syrian churches. It is reproduced in the Arabic version of Erpenius, which was taken from the Peshito. Cosmas, an Egyptian traveller of the sixth century, states that only three of the so-called "Catholic" Epistles were received by the Syrians. Later sources charge the Syrian churches with

mutilating the New Testament by not having these books in their Bibles.

The Epistle is also omitted in the Latin Version, that is, in the oldest editions. That the Vulgate is unreliable is well known. Westcott makes the following argument about the missing second Epistle of Peter in the Latin version: "If we suppose that it was once received into the canon like the first Epistle, it would in all probability have been translated by the same person, as seems to have been the case with the Gospel of Luke and the Acts (both written by Luke), though their connection is less obvious; and while every allowance is made for the difference in style in the original Epistles, we must look for the same rendering of the same phrases. But when on the contrary, it appears that the Latin test of the Epistle not only exhibits constant and remarkable difference from the text of other parts of the Vulgate, but also differs from the first Epistle in the rendering of words common to both, when it further appears that it differs not less clearly from the Epistle of Jude in those parts which are almost identical in the Greek; then the supposition that it was admitted into the Canon at the same time with them becomes at once unnatural. It is indeed possible that the two Epistles may have been received at the same time and yet have found different translators." But this argument does not mean at all that this Epistle is spurious and should be excluded from the New Testament.

But while the Epistle is not mentioned in the Muratorian fragment, in the writings of Polycarp, Papias, Irenaeus and others, and while it is missing in the Peshito and the earlier editions of the Vulgate, Hippolytus (living in the first half of the third century) was evidently acquainted with the Epistle, for in writing on the Antichrist he makes use of 2 Peter i:21. Eusebius, the church historian, gives incontrovertible testimony that the Epistle was positively known at the close of the second century as the second Epistle of Peter. He shows that Clement of Alexandria (about 190 A.D.) knew the Epistle as the work of Peter

and used it. The successor of Clement, Origen, according to Eusebius, wrote: "Peter has left one acknowledged Epistle, and possibly also a second, for it is disputed." It was through Jerome's (Eusebius Hieronymus, born 390 A.D.) efforts that the Epistle was added to the Vulgate, He wrote: "Peter wrote two Epistles, which are termed Catholic, the second of which is denied by most to be his, because of the disagreement of its style with that of the former Epistle." On account of these historical facts opinions among scholars have been very much divided. Many reject the Petrine authorship of this Epistle, but other scholars accept it without any question. Among those who defend the Epistle against those who deny it are scholars of the highest reputation like Alford, Olshausen, Keil and others.

The Sufficiency of Internal Evidence

The fact is that external evidences to confirm the authenticity of Second Peter are not needed, for the internal evidences are beyond controversy of such a nature as to establish the Petrine authorship. The Epistle starts with the name of Peter. In the Greek the name Simon is spelled "Symeon" or "Simeon." If we turn to Acts xv:14 we read that James called Peter "Symeon," the Aramaic form for Simon. Then the writer refers to the fact that he would have soon to put off this tabernacle "even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." He was now an old man, and the Lord had spoken to him at the lakeside "When thou art old thou shalt stretch forth thy hands" (John xxi). Still stronger is the reference of the writer to the transfiguration, where Peter was present, and he speaks of it as being an eyewitness of His Coming and of His Majesty. And, finally, the writer says: "This *second* Epistle, beloved, I now write unto you" (chapter iii:1).

Critical Claims and Evasions

This internal evidence destructive critics try to evade and offset. They claim that the writer was not Simon Peter,

but that some unknown author, using Peter's name, wrote this document. It is the same foolish invention advanced by Old Testament critics as to the authorship of the Book of Daniel.

To establish this theory they point to the fact that there was a tendency in the early church to use Peter's name in different pseudo documents, such spurious writings as "The Gospel of Peter; The Revelation of Peter; the Acts of Peter and the travels of Peter." But the fact of these forgeries, some of which cover some of the text of the second Epistle of Peter, is an evidence that a genuine writing exists. According to the opinions of the men who reject the authorship of Peter, the writer of this Epistle to give standing to his production, thought best to impersonate the Apostle Peter and so he started right in the beginning by saying he is Peter. And he is careful to select the aramaic form of Peter's name, the name Symeon. Would a forger not rather have avoided that uncommon use of Peter's name? But, furthermore, he also tells us that the Lord had told him about his death; and yet this man was not Peter, nor had the Lord ever told him, what he had spoken to Peter about the time and manner of his death. Then the writer of the Epistle claims to have been on the Mount of Transfiguration, that he beheld His glory there and heard the voice of the Father speaking. He is positive that he was present and was an eyewitness, the strongest possible claim. Yet if it was not Peter who wrote this Epistle, then it must have been either John or James, because there were only three eyewitnesses of the transfiguration. But would John or James write thus, hiding their identity under the name of Peter? Then the writer, assuming the name of Peter, declares that he had written the first Epistle, which Peter beyond doubt wrote, yet he had *not* written that Epistle. Here are three (in plain English) *lies*. A man writes an Epistle claiming to be Peter, but he is not Peter at all; hence he is a fraud. The same man claims that he was at the lake of Tiberias, that the Lord told him about his death; yet he was not there, for he was not Peter; therefore this impersonator is a fraud. This

is an especially strong point. The fact that the Lord had announced Peter's death was known to but a few at that time, when the Epistle was written, which we take was about the year 65 A. D. The Gospel of John where the Lord's prophecy as to Peter's future is recorded had not yet been written. Furthermore, he says that he saw the transfiguration, which he did not see; hence he lied. The fourth lie is his claim that he wrote the first Epistle, which he did not write. It is astonishing what inventions the enemies of the Bible can bring forth simply to discredit the Word of God and to deny its authenticity. If Peter is not the writer of this Epistle the whole Epistle is a miserable fraud, a dishonest piece of work, a forgery of the worst kind, which every honest man must despise. The foolish babblings of critics: "it is a useful document and should be read by all Christians, though Peter did not write it himself," is ridiculous. Either Peter wrote it and then it must be accepted; or Peter did not write it and in such a case the whole business is a forgery and a fraud. But would a fraud ever have written such a wonderful message as the one with which this second Epistle begins? Would a conscious fraud have warned against apostasy as found in the second chapter? Would he, could he, have exhorted fellow-believers in the way as it is done in this Epistle? It is a moral impossibility.

The Character of the Second Epistle

One of the critics makes the following statement in denying the Petrine authorship: "The fact that the only allusions to the incidents in the Lord's life found in the Epistle are such as would support the character as one writing as Peter does become, in view of the silence of the Epistle as to the passion, the resurrection, the ascension, and of the absence from it of allusions to the Lord's teaching as recorded in the Gospel, are a serious ground for questioning the Petrine authorship of the Epistle" (Chase). Like most critics this one lacks in spiritual discernment. In fact, if critics had some spiritual insight in the majestic scope of God's holy Word, they would

not be critics, but worshipers. All second Epistles, except second Corinthians, have a peculiar character. Second Thessalonians, second Timothy, second and third John, and the little Epistle of Jude are in reality prophetic. They all speak of the future, the coming evils in professing Christendom, the apostasy, and all warn against these things. The second Epistle of Peter shares the same character with the other second Epistles and Jude's Epistle. There was no need for Peter to refer again to the passion, the resurrection and ascension of Christ, for besides being outside of the scope of this second letter, he had given his witness and testimony as to these facts so abundantly in his first Epistle. The Two Epistles harmonize in many ways.

Another Supposed Difficulty

Another supposed difficulty is the similarity that exists between the second chapter of this Epistle and the Epistle of Jude. This difficulty will be taken up more fully, in connection with the annotations of the chapter and in the introduction to Jude's Epistle. The learned scholars have spent much time on the question whether Jude copied from Peter or Peter copied from Jude. Some claim that Peter had Jude's Epistle and used it; others claim that Jude imitated Peter. Even so good a scholar as the late Dean Alford says: "It is well known that, besides various scattered resemblances, a long passage occurs, included in the limits Jude iii:19; 2 Peter ii:1-19, describing in both cases the heretical enemies of the Gospel, couched in terms so similar as to preclude all idea of entire independence. If considerations of human probability are here as everywhere else to be introduced into our estimate of sacred writings, then either one saw and used the text of the other, or both drew from a common document or a common source of oral apostolic teaching." This in reality affects the truth of inspiration, and leans towards criticism. If Peter sat down and copied Jude, what Peter wrote was not inspired, but copied. And if Jude sat down and wrote after the pattern

of Peter, copied him, and worked over his testimony, then Jude is not inspired. But both, Peter and Jude were inspired, and therefore they wrote independent of each other, the Holy Spirit guiding their respective pens, in giving the same testimony of warning.

The Divisions of Second Peter

This second Epistle of Peter may be looked upon as an appendix or complement of the first Epistle. It introduces a testimony as to the future, connected with the Coming of the Lord, which the first Epistle so frequently mentions. While the first Epistle is silent as to the coming evils preceding the Coming of the Lord, this second Epistle sounds the warning and gives, as already stated in the preceding introduction, a prophetic picture of the conditions of Christendom when the age closes. Here, too, we find the exhortations of Peter, similar to those in the first letter. Peter himself states the purpose when he wrote: "This second Epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." While the language may differ in some respects from the language of the first Epistle, the style and development of the Epistle is just like the first, which is even noticeable in our English version. He writes first of the gracious provisions, which are made for those of like precious faith through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, which includes present provisions in precious promises, and the gift of all things that pertain unto life and godliness, as well as the gift of the Word of Prophecy.

The second chapter unfolds the coming dangers of the last days of this age. The false teachers and their pernicious doctrines are revealed with the corresponding warnings to beware of them. The concluding chapter is prophetic; it reveals the future, including the coming great transformation when the physical earth will pass through a judgment by fire, to come forth in an eternal resurrection glory as a new earth, surrounded by new heavens. We follow, therefore, in our annotations the division of the Epistle in three chapters as we have it in our Bibles.

I. **THE GRACIOUS PROVISIONS OF GOD.** Chapter I.

II. **THE EVILS TO COME THROUGH FALSE TEACHERS.** Chapter II.

III. **THE FUTURE OF THE EARTH AND THE CONCLUSION.** Chapter III.

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE GRACIOUS PROVISIONS OF GOD.

CHAPTER I.

1. God's gracious provisions in Christ. 1-4.
2. The Development of the Divine Nature. 5-11.
3. The Promises of Prophecy. 12-21.

1. God's Gracious Provisions in Christ: Verses 1-4. We are not left in doubt who the writer is, not a pseudo Peter, but Simon Peter, the fisherman of Galilee. With this second Epistle he finishes the task given him by the Lord "to strengthen his brethren." The opening verse of the third chapter shows that the Epistle is addressed to the same persons to whom he wrote the first Epistle. He gives first his old name, Simon (or as in the Greek, Symeon), followed by the new name given him by the Lord, Peter. He calls himslf a servant first before he mentions his apostleship. The word servant is the same as the word by which Paul designated himself, that is, a slave. Evidently Peter estimated his servantship higher than his apostleship.

He addresses his brethren no longer as he did in his first Epistle as strangers and elect by the foreknowledge of God. His purpose is a different one. No longer does he mention their trials, sufferings and persecutions; this was done abundantly in the preceding document. He addresses them instead as those "that have obtained like precious faith," that is, the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Saviour and Lord. This faith is obtained "through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." In Romans the righteousness of God is the great theme as the ground of the believer's justification (see annotations on Romans iii). Here it has a somewhat different meaning. It is not the question of justification, but the question of God having been righteous, that is, faithful to His promises

by Him who is Jehovah, their own promised Messiah. It was the faithfulness of the God of Israel which had bestowed upon them as a believing remnant this faith, which was now so precious to them, the faith in Jehovah-Jesus as Saviour.

Then follows the greeting: "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ." This form of greeting using the word "multiplied" is confined to the two Epistles of Peter and the Epistle of Jude. It is not without significance. When believers suffer, as seen in the First Epistle of Peter, they can count on God to multiply grace and peace. But Second Peter and the Epistle of Jude look forward to the last days, the end of the age, with its predicted apostasy, and for those days God promises to multiply to His own grace, peace and mercy. But it must be noticed that this multiplication is "through the knowledge of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is not independent of a real heart knowledge of God and His Son, our Lord. There may be a head knowledge of God and of Christ, a barren knowledge which brings no fruit unto God. Of this we read in chapter ii:20-22 of our Epistle. The knowledge of God is in Jesus Christ; through Him we know God in all His gracious fullness (see 1 John v:20). The real heart knowledge of Him produces fruit because it carries with it divine power, which has given to the believer "all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us by glory and virtue." Life and glory are the gifts of grace; life is bestowed in the new birth which fits for glory, but godliness and virtue are the practical results of that grace in the life of the believer. The divine power for godliness and virtue which are to be manifested in the believer's life, that power which is able to act in us and give us the victory, must be laid hold on by faith. "How precious it is to know that faith can use this divine power, realized in the life of the soul, directing it toward glory in the end! What a safeguard from the efforts of the enemy, if we are really established in the consciousness of this divine power acting on our behalf in grace! The heart is led to make glory its object;

and virtue, the strength of spiritual life, is developed on the way to it. Divine power has given all that is needed."*

Having called us by glory and virtue, He has in connection with it, given us exceeding great and precious promises These promises relate to both, glory and virtue. Through these promises we are made partakers of the divine nature, by the divine power acting in us, with the glory as the blessed goal. But by the same power promised unto us, we escape and are delivered from the corruption that is in the world through lust. Here is the real victorious life of a believer. It is not in some kind of a fixed "holiness experience" by which the old nature is eradicated, a teaching which is altogether against Scripture. The heart must be occupied with Christ and the glory by which we are called, as a result the divine power, the Holy Spirit in us, acts and victory over sin results.

2. The Development of the Divine Nature: Verses 5-11. While God promises to His people to add, that is, to multiply, daily grace and peace, they themselves in the faith which realizes the divine power and the glory to come, must add to that faith virtue, and that is to be done "by giving all diligence." The divine nature which the believer has received loves the will of God, it is a holy nature, and therefore abhors the corruption which is in the world by lust. But that divine nature is subject to growth and development in the life of the child of God, and that requires all care and diligence. If Christians say that they possess a new nature, are born again, saved by grace, and continue to live according to the old nature, enjoying the world and its sinful pleasures, without manifesting godliness and virtue, they are not only in a very unscriptural attitude, but on dangerous ground. It would prove that they belong to the class of professors described in chapter ii:20-22.

Seven things are to be added to faith. "Add to your faith virtue." This word means something different from its general meaning in English. It means moral courage, a

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*Synopsis.

courage which refuses the gratification of the old nature. It is the soldier's courage, who stands manfully against all opposition. It is an energy by which the heart is master of itself, and is able to choose the good, and to cast aside the evil, as a thing conquered and unworthy of one's self. Such courage to stand and withstand, this energy to deny one's self, makes full communion with God possible. If such virtue is added to faith it leads to knowledge, the next thing. The truth of God and the things of God are known and learned by obedience, by walking in them. Knowledge gained, without virtue practised, only puffs up and leads to hypocrisy. A true knowledge of God is heart acquaintance with Him. This knowledge leads to temperance, which means self-restraint. And self-restraint, the government of the will, must be followed by patience, which means endurance. How easy it is to endure reproach, wrongs inflicted by others, sufferings—to endure it all in patience when faith looks to Him Who endured more than we are ever called upon to do. If such is the case, godliness will not be lacking. It is a walk with God, communion with Him, child-like trust and obedience and reverence. Out of such a heart of faith, which has moral courage, practises self-restraint, knowing God, endures and is godly—affections towards fellow-believers flow forth and brotherly love is added. This is what the knowledge of God teaches, "Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (1 Thess. iv:9). But there is something still higher than brotherly kindness and affection, and that is "Love." It means divine Love, which is the very nature of God Himself. "If divine love governs me, I love all my brethren; I love them because they belong to Christ; there is no partiality. I shall have greater *enjoyment* in a spiritual brother; but I shall occupy myself about my weaker brother with a love that rises above his weakness and has a tender consideration for it. I shall concern myself with my brother's sin, from love to God, in order to restore my brother, rebuking him, if needful; nor, if divine love be in exercise, can brotherly love be associated

with disobedience. In a word, God will have His place in all my relationships."*

Here, then, is food for self-examination and self-judgment. Does my faith in Christ, in whom all things are freely supplied pertaining to life and godliness, produce moral courage—does it produce heart knowledge of God, self-restraint, endurance in meekness, godliness and brotherly love and is all governed in me according to love, the very essence of God Himself? These things should be not only in us, but abound. It will not leave us barren or unfruitful. "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off (short-sighted) and hath forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins." There is not only the blindness of the natural man, but there may be a blindness and short-sightedness of a believer. It means that a believer whose new nature does not develop and manifest itself in these things, is short-sighted in respect to the heavenly things, the seen things which surround him are the objects which absorb his mind. Such a one forgets that he was cleansed from his former sins. The joy and peace in the Holy Spirit are no longer a present possession; his own heart condemns him and he lacks the reality of His salvation; the joy of it is gone, he has forgotten his cleansing from his former sins. When a believer remembers what God has done for Him in redemption, he will also long for a practical manifestation of that salvation in a godly life and walk.

He speaks next of making our calling and election sure. But is this not sure already? As far as God, who has called and elected us, is concerned, it is sure. To have a consciousness of our calling and election, the sureness of it, requires diligence to walk in the path which the Holy Spirit through the pen of Peter has so beautifully described. Those who walk thus will not stumble, and, finally, "an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

3. The Promises of Prophecy: Verses 13-21. Having

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*John N. Darby.

mentioned the coming kingdom of Christ, the Holy Spirit now enlarges upon this. We pointed out in the first Epistle that salvation to be revealed, as repeatedly stated, means the visible and glorious appearing of our Lord to establish His kingdom on earth. Peter does not teach the coming of the Lord for His Saints at all. He knew it, of course, for the Lord had revealed it through Paul. Inasmuch as Peter writes to this remnant of believing Jews, and that remnant is also representative of another remnant, which will, during the great tribulation, suffer and wait for the coming of the King, the second half of this chapter is therefore taken up with the kingdom in manifestation, as revealed in prophecy and foreshadowed by the transfiguration.

He speaks first of His coming departure; the Lord had told him about that long ago. But there was no doubt a special intimation from the Lord that this event would now soon be and he would have "to put off this tabernacle." So before his departure he was anxious to give them instructions by the Spirit of God, so that they might have these things always in remembrance. This makes it clear once more that Peter did not look for a chain of successors to become guardians and instructors of the faith.

He and the other Apostles had not followed cunningly devised fables when they made known the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. They had been eye witnesses of His majesty. But where and how? He speaks of the scene on the holy mount, when the Lord Jesus Christ was transfigured before them, when they heard the voice of the Father from the excellent glory. He stood upon that mount clothed with the glory of the Father; with Him Moses and Elijah, the one who had died, the other who went to heaven without dying. It was a foregleam of His coming glory and a fulfillment of the promise given in the last verse of Matthew xvi. As He stood upon that mountain, so He will appear in His glory on earth again, bringing His saints with Him. It is His visible and glorious appearing to which Peter refers, and which was foreshadowed in the transfiguration,

and not that coming promised to His own in John xiv:1-3, to take them into the Father's house.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy" should be rendered, "We have the word of prophecy made more sure." The Word of prophecy is, of course, in the Old Testament. But is not this sure enough? Why should it be made more sure? It must be understood in the sense of attesting, or confirming the word of prophecy. The transfiguration confirmed the prophecies in the Old Testament. The prophets describe such a scene like the transfiguration, when the Son of Man comes from heaven in power and glory; hence the word of prophecy has been confirmed, made more sure, by the scene on the holy mount. Let it be stated again that the Old Testament prophetic Word does not reveal that coming for His saints, which is for the church "that blessed Hope." When Paul speaks of it in 1 Corinthians xv he speaks of it as a mystery; it was hidden in former ages (1 Cor. xv:51). Yet in the verse before us Peter alludes to it when he speaks of the morning star. There is a difficulty connected with this verse, and some have read it as if it meant that the morning star must arise in the heart of the individual, as it has been stated in the following comment: "The day star arising in our hearts will be the inner premonitions which announce the coming, as the day star heralds the dawn; such premonitions might be occasioned by observing the various signs of the coming." But it does not mean this at all, nor does it mean that prophecy is only to be used for encouragement till we possess the proper Christian hope. The suggested rendering in the "Numerical Bible" removes the difficulty. "We have also the prophetic Word confirmed, to which ye do well in taking heed (as to a lamp that shineth in an obscure place, until the day dawn and the morning star ariseth) in your hearts. It does not mean that the morning star is to arise in the heart of the believer; it means that we should take heed to prophecy in our hearts. And how the entire prophetic Word, that blessed lamp, is needed in these darkening days!

The day dawn is preceded by the rising of the morning

star, or day star, and the morning star is the blessed emblem of the coming of the Lord for His saints. He is both the morning star and the sun of righteousness. He appears as the morning star for His saints and afterward in full glory as the sun of righteousness.

The closing statements of this chapter are also of much importance. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." Prophecy never could be produced by the will of man; God only knows the future and He has spoken concerning the future. The fact of prophecy is one of the great evidences of the supernaturalness of the Bible. The men who were used to communicate prophecy spoke from God; they were moved by the Holy Spirit. For this reason the pernicious school of destructive criticism has always aimed at the prophetic Word, for if they concede that there is prophecy, they acknowledge their defeat. What denials and theories they have used in order to get rid of prophecy we cannot follow here. The next chapter shows what results have been brought about through the rejection of the truth stated by Peter, that God hath spoken. Of equal importance is the divine statement, "that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation." Rome has used the word "private" to uphold its awful lie, that Scripture should never be interpreted by a private individual. As a result Rome discourages in every way the reading of the Word of God. In the past that system burned the Bibles, often chaining the Bible to the martyr at the stake, burning the hated Book with the hated witness. Give Rome her old time power and she will do it again. The prophetic Word only is here in view. Prophecy shows a divine unity that is wonderful. Some have said that history must interpret prophecy, but that is not so. History is predicted in advance by prophecy. In interpreting prophecy, prophetic Scripture must be compared with prophetic Scripture. Prophecy must be taken as a whole. We have no business to say, as it is often done, "I think it means this

or that." Prophecy starts in Genesis iii:15. The consummation of all prophecy is the Kingdom of Christ, the victory of God in His Son, the complete defeat of Satan. Every prophecy is a part of prophecy, having one and the same object and can, therefore, not be interpreted by itself, independent of the rest of prophecy. All the confusion which is in the professing church today as to the prophetic forecasts of the Word of God is the result of having ignored this important injunction.

II. THE EVIL TO COME THROUGH FALSE TEACHERS

CHAPTER II.

1. The Source of the Evil. 1-3.
2. The Lessons from the Past. 4-10.
3. The Description of the Apostates. 11-22.

1. The Source of Apostasy: Verses 1-3. The Apostle Peter is now being used by the Spirit of God to prophesy. He predicts the coming evil for the professing church, that apostate teachers would do their vicious work. As pointed out in the introduction every other writer of the Epistles bears the same witness and that witness is mostly found in the second Epistles and in the Epistle of Jude (see 1 Tim. iv:1-2; 2 Tim. iii:1-5; iv:1-4; 2 Thess. ii; 1 John ii:18-23; iv:1-6; 2 John, verses 7-11; Jude). He reminds them that among their own nation Israel there were false prophets. The false prophets appeared mostly, if not altogether, when judgment was impending for the nation, as we learn from the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. These false prophets opposed the true prophets of God, who preached the God-given message, while the false prophets rejected the Word of the Lord and belittled it. They spoke out of their own hearts and spoke vanities and lies (Ezek. xiii:2, 8). Their message was "peace" when there was no peace. As a result the people of Israel did not believe the Lord and His Word; they rejected Him. The same, it is predicted, would be repeated in this Christian age, only with this difference,

that not false prophets should appear, but "false teachers." And as this dispensation draws to its close apostasy would set in (consult annotations on 2 Thess. ii). These false teachers, like the false prophets, reject first of all the Word of God; they, too, speak out of their own hearts, that is, vanities and lies. As a result they bring in "privily destructive heresies." All heresies have but one goal, and that is the denial of Christ and the Gospel. Therefore Peter predicts "denying even the Master, who bought them." This is the way of destructive criticism. One looks in vain among the many preachers and teachers who deny the Virgin birth and with it the Deity of Christ, for one who believes that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. All those who deny the Master who bought them began with criticism of the Bible, rejecting first the writings of Moses, casting doubt upon other books, and finally abandoning any kind of faith in the Bible as the Word of God. Well is it called "the destructive criticism," for it is in the end destructive of everything. It is this which is poisoning everything in Christendom today and there is no denomination in which this leaven is not at work. Thus Peter's prediction is increasingly fulfilled in our days and will be much more as this age draws rapidly to its close. We must also notice that it does not say that they deny "the Lord who redeemed them"; but "the Master who bought" or purchased "them." The difference between "purchase" and "redemption" is, that purchase is general, while redemption is limited to those who believe on Him and are thus redeemed by His precious blood. These false teachers never believed on Him as Lord, and, therefore, they are not redeemed by Him, though He paid the purchase price in their behalf. By denying Him they disowned the purchase. And for such there is in store swift destruction. This pronounces the sentence of eternal doom upon all false teachers, upon destructive criticism as well as upon the cults which teach damnable heresies and, by doing it, deny the Master who bought them.

Here is also a prediction of the wide-spread success of these false teachers. "Many shall follow their pernicious

(dissolute or lascivious) ways, through whom the way of truth shall be blasphemed." They speak of making the world better, they pose as teachers of morality and righteousness, but their ways are branded as pernicious. How can they be righteous when they deny that which alone can give righteousness to man? How often it has been brought to light that those who deny the Truth and yet claim to be teachers of morality, were miserable hypocrites. Unbelief produces worldliness and immorality. Then the way of truth is being blasphemed and "that worthy Name" is being dishonored.

"And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose judgment now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not." The people of God are their prey. They are covetous, seeking their own gratification in money, social standing, fame and everything else that the natural heart loves and desires. All is abundantly verified in the conditions about us. But retribution will surely come upon them.

2. The Lessons from the Past: Verses 4-10. Here we reach the section of second Peter, which is so much like the greater part of Jude's Epistle, that critics have claimed that one must have copied from the other. We have shown in the introduction that Peter and Jude wrote independently of each other as the direct instruments of the Holy Spirit. The correspondence of Peter's testimony with Jude's Epistle is more fully examined in the introduction to Jude.

The Spirit of God calls attention through Peter to that which happened in past history, showing that God deals with apostates who defy Him and are disobedient, while the godly He delivers. In Jude we shall find out, that while there is much similarity, the purpose of the testimony is quite different from that of Peter. First, mention is made of the angels who sinned and who are cast down to hell, the word being Tartarus (the very lowest pit), where they are kept in chains of darkness for the coming judgment. It is evident that this passage does not mean Satan and the angels who joined in his rebellion before ever man was created.

Satan and the fallen angels are not now in the lowest pit awaiting there in a helpless condition the judgment; they are not in chains, but loose, and Satan, as the prince of this world, uses his angels in the pursuit of his work. Who, then, are these angels? They are the beings described in Genesis vi:1-4 as the "sons of God" (a term which in the Old Testament means angels) who came down and mingled with the daughters of men. These angels, as Jude tells us, did not keep their first estate, left their assigned place, and by their disobedience became the means of corrupting the race in such a manner that the judgment of God had to act in the deluge. God has not been pleased to give a complete revelation of this sinister event. That it means this episode is learned that Peter at once speaks of the old world, which was not spared by God, "but saved Noah, the eighth person (with seven others), a preacher of righteousness, having brought in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." This testimony is closely linked with what Peter had written in the first Epistle (1 Peter iii:19-20). And here we are told that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. He and his house had found grace in the sight of the Lord, while the mass of the ungodly world who rejected His Truth and His Spirit, who strove with them, were not spared but dealt with in judgment. It is so now. Another day is coming in which the Lord will judge the ungodly and unbelieving, while His people will be saved.

Sodom and Gomorrah are cited also as examples of God's holy judgment. These cities were turned into ashes, as an example of all those who live ungodly. The awful fruit of sin in the most terrible, unutterable corruption was manifested in these cities; the same corruption is found still in the world, and that mostly in the great centers of Christendom. (Romans i:27 mentions the same corruption so often referred to by classic writers of Rome and Greece.) Lot, who was in Sodom, though not of Sodom, is called, nevertheless, righteous, was vexed from day to day with their lawless deeds. The Lord delivered him. It is another warning to the false teachers with their denials and heresies, for

the rejection of God's Word brings in the flood of immorality, licentiousness and lawlessness. The God who turned Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, by raining upon them fire and brimstone, will also deal with the apostasy at the close of this age, and with the teachers who deny the Master who bought them, in spite of their self-flattery that they are moral. That judgment comes "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. i:7-9). These false teachers sneer at these words of Paul and call them quotations taken from the apocalyptic literature of the Jews, or something else; but the day will surely come when the Lord will vindicate His Truth. In the meantime He knows the righteous, watches over them and knows how to deliver them.

3. The Description of the Apostates: Verses 11-22. This is one of the most solemn portions of the Word of God. It is prophetic, for here we have a description of the false teachers of the last days. Here is a startling picture of the baptized infidels of Christendom. It corresponds in a measure with 2 Timothy iii:1-5. They are bold (daring), self-willed, and tremble not to rail at dignities. They are unbridled in their talk and in their conduct. They are daring enough to assail every part of the Truth of God, they call His revelation a myth, the Virgin birth a legend, and despise the atoning work of the Son of God; they do what angels would never do, railing at dignities.*

As we read on let us remember that not Peter, but the

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*Jude has more to say about this; it is a well-known fact that some of the liberal theology leaders have joined hands with socialism in its worst form, that is, the anarchistic side of it. They speak of helping the masses and they rail against existing law and order, and advocate their overthrow. The ringleader of an attempt in Western Canada against the government was an apostate preacher of an honored denomination. The so-called "parlor-bolshevists" belong to this class.

Holy Spirit speaks. They are compared to beasts, just born to be caught and to be destroyed; they speak evil of the things of which they know nothing whatever. The meaning is that they were never born again, and therefore follow the flesh, though it may be under the guise of culture and learning. They shall perish in their own corruption. They count it pleasure to revel in the day-time, they delight in luxurious and sinful pleasures. More than that, they claim a Christian profession and fellowship, by attending the love-feasts of believers, which they dishonor by their presence as spots and blemishes, while at the same time they glory in their deceivings, their false teachings and denials of the Master. The right (or straight) way which they professed to have taken, when they took the name of Christ upon themselves, they have now left, having gone astray. Therefore they have eyes full of adultery and cannot cease from sin; they entice unstable souls, leading them astray as they have gone astray themselves.

They are also following in the way of Balaam, who was rebuked for his iniquity by the speaking of the dumb ass. The love of money controls them, as it controlled the heathen prophet. Verses 17 and 18 give additional descriptions of the character of these false teachers. They are springs without water, men look to them for the refreshing water of life, because they profess to be teachers; "the hungry sheep look up and are not fed." They know nothing of the water of life. They are nothing but obscuring mists driven by the tempest of their natural hearts. The great swelling words is the divine estimate of empty, human rhetoric by which thousands are swayed, but they are words of vanity, instead of bringing souls to Christ and the knowledge of redemption, they allure them through the lusts of the flesh, while they promise liberty to others, they are themselves slaves of corruption. Such is the character of the false teachers, who deny the Master that bought them.

"For if, after having escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter

end is worse with them than the first. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, having known it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them." Does this mean that these persons were at one time really begotten again, having received life and the Holy Spirit by trusting on Christ? These false teachers certainly were never born again; the description which we have of them is the proof of it. The last verse of this chapter gives the conclusive evidence. Believers, true Christians, are never compared to dogs or swine; they are the sheep of His flock. A sheep cannot be transformed into a dog or a swine, nor will a sheep do what a dog or a swine does. They were therefore never true children of God. They had escaped the outward pollutions of the world, which is a different thing from the escape of the corruption which is in the world by lust; the latter stands for the inward deliverance by the new birth, the former for an outward reformation which had taken place when they professed the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when for a time forsaking their evil ways so that they escaped the pollutions. But not having a new nature they became entangled therein and overcome, so that it was worse with them than in the beginning, before they had made a profession. They had known the way of righteousness as made known in the Gospel of Christ, but the life which is offered in that way of righteousness, with the fruits of righteousness which follow, they had never accepted by a living faith. And this seems to be the case with the vast majority of the false teachers of today, the destructive critics, and those who deny the Deity of our Lord. They were never born again; they never had a true experience of real salvation, hence they are but natural men, not having the Spirit.

III. THE FUTURE OF THE EARTH. THE CONCLUSION

CHAPTER III.

1. Mocking at the Lord's Coming. 1-7.
2. The Future of the Earth. 8-10.
3. Exhortation and Conclusion. 11-18.

1. Mocking at the Lord's Coming: Verses 1-7. The opening statement shows conclusively that Peter is the author and that this second Epistle was sent to the same believers to whom the first Epistle was addressed. The critics claim that this chapter marks a separate Epistle in itself and that it was combined by mistake with the preceding two chapters. Like so much else the critics put forth this is a foolish speculation wholly unwarranted.

Peter states the reason for this second Epistle "to stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance." He had already used a similar statement in the first chapter (i:12), but now exhorts them to be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through the apostles. The evil had been prophetically pictured by Peter and now he charges them to use the Word of God in the coming days of peril and apostasy, and remember especially its prophetic forecast. The apostle Paul did the same after he had given the warning of the coming of grievous wolves and false teachers (Acts xx:30). Such is the resource of the true church today, and in the degree, as we remember the words spoken by the prophets and by the apostles, give heed to them, we shall be kept in the perilous times. Both the prophets and the apostles warned of the evil to come as each age closes with apostasy and judgment; so did the Lord Himself when He predicted the future of the age and the conditions which precede His physical and glorious return. All have given the warning. Enoch was a prophet, as we learn from Jude; he prophesied about the coming of the Lord to execute judgment. There were apostates in his day who ridiculed his testimony and who spoke against him (Jude, verse 15).

Noah was a preacher of righteousness; he built the ark and sounded the warning, but no one paid any attention to him, and "as it was in the days of Noah so shall it be when the Son of Man cometh," said our Lord. The prophets warned of the judgment in store for Jerusalem; the warning was not heeded, and such a great one as Jeremiah was not believed, and cast into the dungeon. The prophet Amos speaks of those who "put far off the evil day." There were mockers and unbelievers each time an age ended. As already shown, the combined testimony of the apostles is on the same lines. Peter then writes: "Knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for, from the day the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

While before Peter had shown the quality of the false teachers, he now points out by the revelation given unto him, that there would be unbelief and outright mockery touching the visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ. In both Epistles this great coming event, the coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven, has a prominent place. The false teachers, whose doom will be sealed when Christ comes again, also ridicule and scoff at the idea that He will ever show Himself again. And why do they mock and sneer? It has its source in unbelief. These men are infidels. Every destructive critic is an infidel. The records of the past embodied in the Holy Scriptures are denied to be authentic and reliable. The prophets of God were Jewish patriots who dreamt of a great Jewish future. The magnificent prophecies as to the coming kingdom and the rule of the King of kings are classed with the apocalyptic ramblings of the "Sibyline writings." The Lord Jesus Christ is even impeached as to His knowledge and is regarded as being under the ignorant prejudice of the times in which He lived. It all emanates from the rejection of the Bible as the inerrant revelation of God.

Never before has this prophecy been so literally fulfilled

as now. The Holy Spirit has revived the study of prophecy. The midnight cry has gone forth. The blessed hope has been restored to the church, and the forgotten prayer "Even so, Come, Lord Jesus" is being prayed by the members of the body of Christ as never before. There is more preaching and teaching going on today on prophecy than ever before in the history of the church. It is one of the signs that the end of the age is very near. But the revival of prophecy has resulted in the activity of Satan. He both perverts and ridicules the coming of the Lord, and as that blessed event draws near, there will be increasing ridicule and mockery from the side of the apostates.* They dream of human progress, for they are "evolutionists." Their pet law "the survival of the fittest" must work on till the last vestige of the beastly in man has worked itself out by a natural process, for they deny the need as well as the power of redemption. They call a belief in the coming of the Lord "pessimism", and have even attempted to brand those who believe in a catastrophic ending of this present evil age "enemies of civilization and human progress." What God hath spoken, what the mouth of all His holy prophets have declared, that the hope of the world is the coming and the enthronement of the Lord Jesus Christ, is extremely distasteful to them, for it conflicts with the program they have invented, a program which has no scriptural support whatever. They take the ground of an assumed unchangeableness of the world, that a sort of cycle governs nature, and thus they deny the positive statements of the Word of God and exclude God from His own creation.

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*Of late certain presses of "evangelical denominations" have turned out tons of literature warning against the pre-millennial teachings. The Methodist church of Canada circulated a series of 5 pamphlets which attacked the blessed hope. They were the production of an infidel. The Chicago University and similar institutions also fight prophecy. Sneers and ridicule about His Coming, the end of the age, the increase of evil and the coming judgments are constantly multiplying. It is all a fulfillment of what Peter has written.

Science, meant to be a helpmeet to faith, is used by them to uphold their infidelity. They constantly speak of science contradicting revelation, which is not true. The deluge which Peter mentions as an evidence of a past catastrophe, when the world was overflowed with water, they wilfully forget or, as it is now generally done, class it with the myths of other nations, though science has abundantly proven that there happened such a judgment. But they do not want to believe that there can be a supernatural interference with the world. They believe in things continuing as they are and steadily improving. Up to the very time when the predicted sudden destruction shall come upon them, they say "Peace and safety" (1 Thess. v). It was so, no doubt, when the deluge swept the unbelieving and secure generation of that time to eternal doom.*

2. The Future of the Earth: Verses 8-10. A great revelation follows. The heavens that are now, and the earth by the same word have been stored up, reserved for fire against a day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. Then in verse 10, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." As the earth was once judged by water so shall it be judged by fire in the future, and not the earth only but also the heavens, that is the heavens surrounding the earth. Years ago infidels used to ridicule the statement of Peter that the earth and the surrounding heavens would be consumed by fire. They spoke of it as

*Some apply the words relating to a past judgment to the judgment which passed over the original earth on account of Satan's fall. That there was such a judgment the second verse of the Bible teaches and geologic facts confirm that the earth passed through a pre-historic destruction. But the reference is to the deluge. Almost every nation on earth has traditions of the deluge, though often in a perverted form. While the apostates and sneerers make everything of historical evidence and tradition, they ignore the universality of traditions concerning the flood.

an impossibility that the earth with its rivers, lakes and oceans could ever pass through such a conflagration, so that all is consumed. Well informed infidels no longer ridicule this statement, for astronomy with the help of the spectroscope has revealed the fact that other bodies in the heavens have passed through great conflagrations, that other globes have been burned up, and not a few astronomers have advanced the theory that this will be the fate of the earth on which we live. Peter had no telescope, nor did he know anything about astronomy. How did he find out that the earth would be destroyed by fire? It was the Spirit of God who revealed it to him.

The question arises what event is it of which Peter speaks here? He speaks of "the day of the Lord." What phase of that coming day is it? It certainly is not the coming of the Lord for His Saints as revealed in 1 Thess. iv. Nor is it the day of the Lord in its beginning, when the Lord appears in power and great glory. Now it is still "man's day", and when He appears the Day of the Lord begins. One day, Peter tells us, with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. From Revelation we learn that Christ will reign over the earth with His Saints for a thousand years and that is "the Day of the Lord." The beginning of it will be as a thief, and it will bring fiery judgments, for He will be revealed "in flaming fire." But what Peter speaks of is not so much the beginning of that day of the Lord as it is the end, when the thousand years have expired. When the thousand-year reign of Christ as King is over there follows a little season during which Satan is loosed from his prison; the revolt of which Revelations xx:8 speaks is followed by fire falling down from God out of heaven, and after that we see the great white throne, the judgment of the wicked dead. "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them" (Rev. xx:11). It is this of which Peter writes, when the day of the Lord is ended, the earth and the surrounding heaven will pass away; it will be through a mighty conflagration from beneath and from

above.* When Peter writes in verse 13 of new heavens and a new earth, he states what John beheld in his vision of chapter xxi:1. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea."

Some of these Jewish believers were evidently thinking that the Lord was slack about the fulfillment of the promise concerning that day. The apostle tells them that the Lord's slackness is His long-suffering, "He is not willing that any should perish, but all should come unto repentance."

3. Exhortation and Conclusion: Verses 11-18. In view of such a future the apostle exhorts once more to holy living and godliness, "waiting for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God." The thought which is often expressed in the words "hastening the coming of the day of God," that we might act and serve, sending the Gospel to the heathen, and do other things, thus hastening the coming of the Lord, is not warranted by the text, nor is it true. God cannot be hastened by the creature, nor can He be delayed in the execution of His eternal purposes.

As stated in the preceding annotations, the fiery ending of the Day of the Lord, and with it the Day of God, the eternal Age, when God is all in all, is what Peter teaches. "But we, according to His promise, wait for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The promise is found in Isaiah lxv:17, "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come to mind." This is not the millennium, which in this chapter of Isaiah is described in verses 18-25, but that

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*It will be observed, that the Spirit does not speak here of the coming of Christ, except to say that it will be scoffed at in the last days. He speaks of the day of God, in contrast with the trust of unbelievers in the stability of the material things of creation, which depends, as the apostle shows, on the word of God. And in that day everything on which unbelievers rested and will rest shall be dissolved and pass away. This will not be at the commencement of the day, but at its close; and here we are free to reckon this day, according to the apostle's word as a thousand years, or whatever length of period the Lord shall see fit. —Synopsis.

which comes into existence after the earth and the surrounding heavens have passed through the great conflagration. Once more Isaiah speaks of the earth and heavens which will remain forever. (See chapter lxvi:22.) This new earth and the new heavens will be the glorious and eternal dwelling-place of the redeemed, for the New Jerusalem comes finally out of the highest heaven to find its eternal resting place there (Rev. xxi). "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye wait for these things, be diligent to be found in Him in peace without spot and blameless."

In conclusion, Peter refers to Paul as "our beloved brother Paul." The Epistle to the Galatians was then in circulation and everybody could read there of Peter's failure in Antioch. (Gal. ii:12-16). The loving remark by Peter shows that he had readily seen his mistake and that there was no clash between the two servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Epistle which Paul had written to the same Jewish Christians to whom Peter wrote is without question the Epistle to the Hebrews. (See Introduction to Hebrews.)

The second Epistle of Peter ends with another warning, so well suited for our times, "Beware, lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked (destructive critics and deniers of Christ), ye fall from your own steadfastness." And the safeguard is "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

"To Him be Glory both now and forever, Amen."

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

The First Epistle of John

Introduction.

This Epistle is not addressed to any one church nor does it mention, like the other New Testament Epistles, the author of the document; it is anonymous. We are not left in doubt who penned this Epistle in spite of its anonymous character. There can be no question that the author of the Fourth Gospel is also the author of this Epistle. Its opening statement is linked with the opening of the Gospel and throughout it is written in the thought and language of the Fourth Gospel. Inasmuch, then, as that Gospel is indisputably the work of John the Apostle, this Epistle is also the work of his inspired pen. "The internal testimony furnished by this Epistle to its author being the same with the author of the Fourth Gospel is, it may well be thought, incontrovertible. To maintain a diversity of authorship would betray the very perverseness and exaggeration of that school of criticism which refuses to believe, be evidence never so strong" (Alford).

Historical Evidence.

While the internal testimony confirms conclusively the Johannine authorship of the Epistle there is also a mass of historical evidence which attributes the Epistle to the beloved disciple. The oldest testimony is that of Polycarp, who was personally acquainted with the Apostle John. We refer to the introduction of the Gospel of John where we give fuller information on Polycarp and his testimony to the Fourth Gospel. He makes, in one of his writings, a direct reference to 1 John iv:3, in fact, he quotes this verse almost verbatim. It is, therefore, a testimony to the genuineness and the authorship of this Epistle. Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp, frequently quotes the Epistle of John and states that it is John's. Notable is the reference in his

work against heresies as quoted by Eusebius. He cites John xx:31 and connects it with 1 John ii:18 and iv:1-3 and 1 John v:1. After these two witnesses, Polycarp, who knew John, and Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp, every authority among the church fathers mentions this Epistle as being the work of John the Apostle. It is not necessary to quote all these references—by Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria, Eusebius, Jerome, and many others. We mention but one more of the ancient testimonies, that which is found in the Muratorian fragment. This old and very reliable source of the second century has in it the following paragraph: "What wonder is it, then, that John brings forward each detail with so much emphasis, even in this Epistle, saying of himself, "What we have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, and our hands have handled, these things have we written to you. For so he professes that he was not only an eye-witness, but a hearer, and, moreover, a historian of all the wonderful works of the Lord in order. In harmony with this evidence is the testimony of the oldest fourth century Greek manuscripts, which give the title of the Epistle as "*Joannou-A*"—that is—"John 1." Its rejection by the Gnostic Marcion is of no importance, for he excluded from the Scriptures all the writings of the Apostle because they deal a death-blow to his anti-Christian inventions. Lücke, one of the great scholars of bygone days, states that the Gospel of John and the Epistles of John are the genuine works of the Apostle, and he adds, "Incontestably, then, our Epistle must be numbered among those canonical books which are most strongly upheld by ecclesiastical tradition."

It is, therefore, not necessary in face of such internal and external evidences to state the objections of destructive critics like Scaliger, S. G. Lange, Bretschneider and the Tübingen school. As it is with other portions of Scripture they have no case at all in attacking the authorship of this Epistle.

When and Where It Was Written.

The Epistle itself gives no definite answer to these questions. Some have attempted to fix the date as being before the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A. D. They base their assumption on Chapter ii:18 and claim that "the last time" means the closing days for Jerusalem, which is incorrect. The term, "the last time," has in this Epistle the same meaning as in 1 Timothy iv:1 and 2 Timothy iii:1, and therefore does not mean the last days before the City of Jerusalem was destroyed. But it is clear that John wrote the Fourth Gospel record first and his Epistle was written after the Gospel, so that the Epistle was written probably about the year 90, preceding the Revelation, which was written about the year 96.

Irenaeus states that the Gospel was written by John in Ephesus; an ancient tradition states that the Epistle was written from the same place.

To Whom was it Written.

The fact that this Epistle starts, unlike the other Epistles, without any address, introductory greeting or closing salutation, has led some to call it a treatise and not an Epistle. But the personal address and appeal, the style throughout fully sustains the Epistolar character. Others, again, have termed the Epistle a second part of the Gospel (Michaelis), while others speak of it as an introduction to the Gospel. That the Epistle is closely related to the Gospel is very true, but that does not necessitate a closer external relationship.

Dr. Bullinger, in the *Companion Bible*, suggests that this Epistle also was originally addressed to believing Hebrews in the dispersion. This view was held by others before him (Benson and others); but there is nothing whatever in the Epistle to warrant such a conclusion. On account of a remark by Augustinus on 1 John iii:2 that John wrote "to the Parthians," many commentators have adopted this view, which is, however, without any foundation whatever. The Epistle was evidently not addressed to any one church

but to believers in a number of assemblies. John was acquainted with these believers, who seemed to have been mostly Gentile converts. (See Chapter v:21.) If the tradition is true that the Epistle was written in Ephesus, it is not improbable that it was sent to the seven churches in the province of Asia, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea, the churches to whom the Lord sent the messages a few years later when John was in Patmos.

The Purpose of the Epistle.

The purpose of the Epistle is stated by the writer in two places; "These things write we unto you that your joy may be full" (i:4). "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (v:13). According to the Gospel of John Chapter xx:31, this also is the purpose of the Gospel. He writes to those who believe on the Son of God and who have that eternal life which was manifested in the Lord Jesus, and which is imparted to all who believe on the Son of God and which establishes fellowship with the Father and the Son. The Epistle has been rightly called a family letter, that is, believers are viewed as the family of God, hence the repeated use of word *teknia*, children. The Gospel of John was written on account of the false teachings concerning the Person of Christ, which began in the second half of the first century.* The Epistle of John is very outspoken against those errors touching the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ and His sacrificial work. They flourished later under the name of Gnosticism, Docetism, Montanism and others. Marcion, a Gnostic leader, when Polycarp, the disciple of John met him, was addressed by Polycarp with these words, "I know thee, thou firstborn of Satan." While these evil doctrines and denials were not yet fully developed in John's

*See Introduction to John's Gospel, Vol. I of the New Testament.

day, they existed and increased, hence the warnings in Chapter ii:18-25 and iv-1:6. What antichristianity is will be learned from these passages. All the evil systems of today, which are sweeping with increasing force through Christendom towards their divinely appointed and revealed doom are exposed in this Epistle in their true character. Christian Science, falsely so called; the liberal theology, which denies that Christ is the Virgin-born Son of God, the modern religion, the destructive criticism and other systems and cults are all branded by John as antichrists. These many antichrists are finally to be merged into a personal antichrist, the man of sin. Our annotations will enlarge upon all this.

The Message of the Epistle.

The Epistle has a deep spiritual message for the children of God. As already stated, the Epistle, like the Gospel of John, witnesses to Christ as the Son of God and the eternal life which He is Himself and which He imparts to the believer. Thus the Epistle opens, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. (And the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." The great truth which is developed by the Holy Spirit is not so much the life which the believer has in Christ, that is, the eternal life imparted unto him, but it is that life which is in the believer, and the manifestation of that life, a manifestation of the same characteristics as manifested by the Lord Jesus Christ in His blessed life. As born of God, believers have God as their Father, they are children of God. God is Light and God is Love and, therefore, those who are born of God, in whom there is eternal life, must also manifest

light and love, walk in righteousness and in love. This is the message of the First Epistle of John. All the blessed things which cluster around it we shall discover in our analysis and annotations.

The Divisions of The Epistle

The divisions of the first Epistle of John have always been considered a difficulty, so that leading expositors of the past have expressed the belief that there is no contextual connection at all in the Epistle. Calvin shares this belief as well as others. Bengel in his great work "the Gnomen" maintained that there is a logical and contextual arrangement. He divided the Epistle in three parts, naming them in Latin as follows: **I. Exordium**—Introduction i:1-4. **II. Tractatio**—Treatment and discussion i:5-v:12. **III. Conclusio**—Conclusion v:13-21. The Numerical Bible gives also a three-fold division. I. God as Light and in the light, and the light in us. i-ii:11. II. Growth by the Truth, which is nothing else but the light manifested. ii:12-27. III. The Manifestation of the children of God by the fruit found. ii:28-v. This is a helpful arrangement. The "Scofield Bible" gives two main divisions. I. The Family with the Father. i-iii:24. II. The Family and the world. iv-v.

We divide the Epistle into six sections, as follows:

I. THE LIFE MANIFESTED. Chapter i:1-4.

II. LIGHT AND DARKNESS. THE TESTS. Chapter i:5-ii:17.

III. ERROR AND TRUTH. Chapter ii:18-27.

IV. RIGHTEOUSNESS AND LOVE AS MANIFESTED BY THE CHILDREN OF GOD. Chapter ii:28-iii:18.

V. HEREBY WE KNOW. Chapter iii:19-v:12.

VI. THE CONCLUSION. Chapter v:13-21.

Analysis and Annotations

I. THE LIFE MANIFESTED Chapter i:1-4.

The opening verses of this Epistle are very precious and are the key to the whole Epistle. Three Scriptures speak of what was in the beginning. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. i:1). This is the beginning of all things which God called into existence out of nothing. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John i-1). This takes us beyond the first verse of the Bible. It reveals Him, by whom and for whom God created all things, in His eternal existence with God and as God. The third Scripture is the first verse of John's Epistle. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life." This is a different beginning from the beginning in Genesis i:1 and John i:1; it means the manifestation of the Son of God in incarnation among men. He, who is the true God and the eternal life, the life and light, was manifested as man here below. This truth is stated by John in his Gospel in the 14th verse of the first chapter: "And the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." To this John refers in the first statement of his Epistle. John and his fellow-disciples had walked with Him and talked with Him. It must be noted that the Apostle speaks of Him as "the Word of Life;" he does not say therefore "who was from the beginning" but, which was from the beginning. First he mentions what they had heard; but one may hear a person and not be near to that person. But they were closer to the Word of Life, he writes, "which we have seen with our eyes;" yet one may have seen a person without being close to that person; but they had more than a passing vision "which we

have contemplated" which is more than a mere seeing, it denotes gazing with a purpose, with a desire and with admiration. A statement of still greater nearness follows, "our hands have handled"—John and the other disciples had known Him, the Word of Life, intimately.

"And the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and hath been manifested unto us." He whom they heard, with whom they were in touch, whom they knew and gazed upon is the eternal Life which was with the Father. It is more than that He spoke of eternal Life and promised eternal Life, He Himself is the eternal Life. He was with the Father and came into the world, to manifest what that Life is. While He manifested the Father, as He witnessed "whosoever seeth Me seeth the Father," He also displayed as man what eternal life is in His blessed and perfect life He lived on earth. And this eternal life is communicated to all who believe on the Son of God. This life which was with the Father, manifested in the Lord Jesus on earth, is the life which is in us.* To know then what life we possess as believers, we must not look in ourselves, or to other believers, but to Christ and the life He manifested on earth. As another has said, "When I turn my eyes to Jesus, when I contemplate all His obedience, His purity, His Grace, His tenderness, His patience, His devotedness, His holiness, His love, His entire freedom from all self-seeking, I can say, that is *my* life. It may be that it is obscured in me; but it is none the less true, that it is my life."

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

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*"The life has been manifested. Therefore we have no longer to seek for it, to grope after it in the darkness, to explore at random the indefinite, or the obscurity of our own hearts, in order to find it, to labor fruitlessly under the law, in order to obtain it. We behold it: it is revealed, it is here, in Jesus Christ. He who possesses Christ possesses that life."

And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

What they had seen and heard they have declared unto others, to those who also believe on Him, so that they too might share in the same fellowship, the fellowship of the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. The life which believers possess, the eternal life given through grace, the life He manifested on earth and which is in us, fits us for fellowship with both the Father and the Son. What such a fellowship demands and the tests of it is developed subsequently. To have such fellowship, bestowed through grace, is the blessed calling of all the saints of God. Such fellowship is eternal life and there is nothing beyond that in heaven itself, while we enjoy it here the fullness of it will be enjoyed in glory. But what is fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ? It is but little understood in its real meaning. Fellowship means having things in common. The Father's delight is in Him who pleased Him so perfectly. For the Father His blessed Son is the One altogether lovely. Believers knowing the Son also find their delight in Him; He is for our hearts the One altogether lovely. As we then delight ourselves in Him, in His obedience, in what He is in love and devotion to the Father, we share the same feelings and thoughts with the Father, which is fellowship with the Father. Whenever the believer praises and thanks the Father for His Son, tells the Father of his deep appreciation of Him, how he loves Him, longs to be more like Him, walk even as He walked, then he is in fellowship with the Father. And the Son has given to us the knowledge of the Father. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. xi:27). It is in the Gospel of John where the blessed words of the Son concerning the Father are recorded. He manifested unto His own the name of the Father. In the five chapters in the Gospel of John, beginning with the feet-washing and ending with the great intercessory prayer of our Lord (chapters xiii-xvii) the word "Father" occurs fifty times. It is in this part of the Gospel the Son

makes known the Father. Through the Son we have the knowledge of the Father and the knowledge of the Father's love. His delight was to glorify the Father in a life of devotion and obedience. And as the believer delights Himself in the Father, honors Him and yields obedience to Him, he has fellowship with the Son, has the same thing in common with the Son. Fellowship with the Father and with the Son is therefore not a feeling or some extraordinary experience.

"All this flows, whether in the one or the other point of view, from the Person of the Son. Herein our joy is full. What can we have more than the Father and the Son? What more perfect happiness than community of thoughts, feelings, joys and communion with the Father and the Son, deriving all our joy from themselves? And if it seem difficult to believe, let us remember that, in truth, it cannot be otherwise; for, in the life of Christ, the Holy Ghost is the source of my thoughts, feelings, communion, and He cannot give thoughts different from those of the Father and the Son. They must be in their nature the same. To say that they are adoring thoughts is in the very nature of things, and only makes them more precious. To say that they are feeble and often hindered, while the Father and the Son are divine and perfect, is, if true, to say the Father and the Son are God, are divine, and we feeble creatures. That surely none will deny. But if the blessed Spirit be the source, they must be the same as to nature and fact.

This is our Christian position then, here below in time, through the knowledge of the Son of God; as the apostle says, "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."*

II. LIGHT AND DARKNESS. THE TESTS.

Chapter i:5—ii:17.

1. God is Light. Walking in Darkness and in Light. i:5–7.
2. What the Light manifests. 8–10.
3. The Advocacy of Christ to maintain the Fellowship. ii:1–2.
4. The Tests of Fellowship. 4–17.

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*J. N. Darby.

I. God is Light. Walking in Darkness and in the Light: i:5-7. The message they had heard of Him and which they declared to others is, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. Light, perfect, pure light is God's nature; He is absolutely holy, with no darkness in Him at all. That God is light was manifested in the life of the Lord Jesus, for He was and is holy. Fellowship with the Father and the Son means, therefore, to have fellowship with light, and that excludes a walk in darkness. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness we lie and do not the truth." If one professes to have fellowship with God and walks in darkness, he lies, for darkness can have no fellowship with light. "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." But what is this walk in the light? It is not the same thing as walking according to the light. It does not mean to live a perfect and sinless life. Walking in the light is not the question of *how* we walk, but *where* we walk, and the place where the believer walks is the light. It means to walk daily in His presence, with our will and conscience in the light and presence of God, judging everything that does not answer to that light. Whatever is not right is brought at once in His presence, exposed to the light, confessed, judged and put away. Such is the walk in the light which fellowship with God demands. The result of such a walk in the light is mutual fellowship among believers, because each has the same nature of God and the same Spirit, the same Christ as the object before the heart and the same Father. It cannot be otherwise. Then there is another thing stated, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Walking in the light shows us what we are and we cannot say that we have no sin. But we have no consciousness of sin resting upon us before a holy God, though we know that sin is in us, but we have the assurance of being cleansed from it by His precious blood. Such is the blessed position of a true Christian. Fellowship with the Father and with His Son, walking in the light as He is in

the light, fellowship one with another and the cleansing power of the blood.

2. What the Light Manifests: Verses 8-10. The light makes known that sin is in us. If the believer, the child of God, says that he has no sin, the light contradicts him. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. The denial of sin within is a delusion. This evil teaching that the old Adamic nature is eradicated in the believer is widespread in our day among Holiness, Pentecostal and other sects. True spirituality is to confess daily, walking in the light, that in our flesh there dwelleth no good thing. And if sin is committed it needs confession. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The light also manifests another evil, the claim of a sinless perfection. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His Word is not in us. Some have applied this verse to the unsaved; it has nothing to do with the sinner, but relates to a true believer, who in presumption makes the claim that he lives without sinning. And the reason why children of God make such unscriptural claims is inattention to His Word, for the Word makes manifest what sin is, and the Apostle says "If we say that we have not sinned . . . His word is not in us."

3. The Advocacy of Christ to Maintain the Fellowship: ii:1-2. For the first time John uses the endearing term "my little children," meaning the born ones of God, who are born into the family of God by having believed on the Son of God. One might conclude inasmuch as belief in the eradication of the old nature and sinless perfection is a delusion, that the child of God must sin. But, while sin is within, and a sinless perfection is beyond our reach, it does not mean that the believer should continue in sin. He had written these things that they might not sin. But if any man sin a gracious provision has been made. Let it be noticed that the application, as it is often done, to the sinner who is outside, who knows not Christ at all, is totally wrong. It means the little children, the members of the

family of God. If any true child of God sins we have an advocate with the Father (not God, it is the matter of the family), Jesus Christ the righteous. The advocacy of Christ restores the sinning believer to the communion with the Father and the Son which sin interrupted. He does not wait till we come repenting and confessing, but in the very moment we have sinned He exercises His blessed office as our Advocate with the Father and His intercession produces in us repentance, confession and self-judgment. Thus we are maintained by Himself in the fellowship into which the grace of God has called and brought us. When the believer sins it does not mean that he has lost his salvation. Many a child of God has been harassed through ignorance, and imagined that he committed the unpardonable sin. The sin of a believer does not make him unsaved or lost, but it makes fellowship with the Father and the Son impossible till the sin is judged and confessed. This is accomplished by His advocacy.

"The Lord Jesus as much lives to take up the failure of His own, as He died to put away their sins by His blood. This, too, is founded on propitiation; but there is besides the blessed fact that He is the righteousness of the believer in the presence of God. His one expiatory sacrifice avails in abiding value; His place is before God as our righteousness; and there for the failing He carries on His living active advocacy with the Father."

4. The Tests: Verses 4-17. John now writes of the characteristics of the life which the believer has received, the eternal life, and applies certain tests. The profession of a Christian is that He knows God. But how do we know that we know Him? The answer is, "If we keep His commandments." This is not legality in the least which puts the believer back under the law. John knows nothing of that. Obedience is the leading trait of the imparted life. It is set on doing the will of God. Christ walked on earth in obedience; His meat and drink was to do the will of Him that sent Him. Inasmuch as His life is in us as believers, it must manifest itself in obedience to the will of God.

It is the same which we find in 1 Peter i:2, sanctified, or set apart, unto the obedience of Jesus Christ. It is not a sinless obedience as it was in Him; while the believer has his heart set on obeying the Lord and doing His will, he often fails and stumbles, but he continues to aim at doing the will of God, for that is the nature of the new life. "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in Him."

One who professes to know God and does not manifest obedience is no Christian at all, but he is a liar, and the truth in the knowledge of the Lord is lacking in such a one. He is a mere professing Christian, one who has the outward form of godliness but does not know the power of it, because he has not the life in him, which is His life and in which he delights to obey. The first great test of the reality of the divine life in the believer is obedience.

Then follows a second test: "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." In His prayer our Lord told the Father, "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world;" and again, "As Thou hast sent me into the world so have I sent them into the world" (John xvii:16, 18). Believers are not of the world as He is not of the world, because they are born again and have His life in them. They are in Him, abiding in Him, and therefore they must walk as He walked, which does not mean to be what He was, for He was without sin, but it is a walk after His own pattern, the reproduction of His character and life through the power of the Holy Spirit. In the next two verses we read of the old commandment and of the new commandment (Verses 7 and 8). The old commandment is explained as the word which they had heard from the beginning, that is, the same beginning as mentioned in Chapter i:1, the manifestation of Christ on earth. But what is the commandment of which he speaks next? It is something new now, for the life which was in Him on earth is in believers now. Therefore, it is true in Him and in us because the darkness is

passing away and the true light already shineth. Christ is life and light and as His life is in us we share it in Him; this is that which is new. It was true of Him first, and now it is true of us, too. This is followed by another test. "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother is in darkness even until now." The life must manifest itself in love. Light and love go together; both are manifested in Christ, He was light and love. If He is, therefore, in the believer, and he possesses that life, and professes to be in the light, and with such a profession hateth his brother, he shows thereby that he is in the darkness until now. Love cannot be separated from that life and light which was in Him and which is in us as believers. He that abideth in the light loveth his brother and because he does there is no occasion of stumbling in him. In him who loves there is neither darkness nor occasion of stumbling; in him who does not love there is both darkness and stumbling. He who hates his brother is a stumbling block to himself and stumbles against everything. Not loving the brethren and manifesting hatred against them is the sure sign of being in darkness and walking in darkness. Such are the tests of Christian profession; light and love, obedience and loving the brethren; where there is no life from God there is absence of love for the brethren and a walk in darkness and not in the light. It seems that many in John's day were in that deplorable condition, while today such is almost universally the case.

Verses 12-17 contain a message to those who are in the light, who possess that life and in whom it is manifested in obedience and in love. He addresses the fathers and the young men. Before he does this he mentions that which all believers, even the most feeble, possess. "I write unto you little children (the term of endearment which means the whole family of God) because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." This is blessedly true of every child of God. Each has "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." It is the thing which is settled for time and eternity for all those who are in Christ.

Then different grades are mentioned: fathers, young men

and little children. The meaning is in the spiritual sense, fathers in Christ, young men in Christ and babes in Christ. The word "children" used in verses 13 and 18 is a different word from the one used in verse 12. In this chapter in verses 1, 12 and 28 the little children are all the family of God, but in verses 13 and 18 it means young converts.

The maturity of the fathers consists in knowing Him that was from the beginning, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ. Spiritual progress and maturity is a deep knowledge and appreciation of Christ. The Apostle Paul illustrates what real Christian maturity is. He had but one desire to know Him; not I but Christ; Christ is all. The Fathers have Christ for their fullest portion and walking in Him have learned the depths of His Grace and the glory of His person. They are occupied not with their experience but with Himself. It has been well said, "All true experience ends with forgetting self and thinking of Christ." To know Him, to know Him still better, to be entirely dependent on Him, to have none other but Him, never losing sight of Him—that is the highest attainment of a Christian.

He speaks next of the young men, who have advanced in their Christian life. They had gone forward in undaunted faith and courage and overcame the difficulties; they overcame by faith the wicked one. The strength of the new life, that is, Christ, was manifested in them in conflict. The "babes" come next, the young converts, who have not much experience in conflict. To them he writes, "Ye have known the Father." Every newborn babe in Christ cries, enabled by the Spirit of adoption, "Abba, Father." To know God as Father is the blessed birthright of every newborn soul.

Once more he writes the same to the fathers. He can add nothing to it for the highest attainment is to know Him, as the fathers know Him. But he has more to say to the young men. He tells them that they are strong, because the Word of God was abiding in them, which is the source of power and strength of every believer and because the Word of God abided in them they overcame the wicked one. Then follows the exhortation and warning not to love the world, the world

of which John speaks later, "which lieth in the wicked one."

This world-system in every aspect, whether we call it the social world, the political world, the commercial world, the scientific world, the religious world—all is not of the Father. All its glory is not of the Father. The love of the world is, therefore, inconsistent with the love of the Father. The controlling principles in it are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. May we remember once more that our Lord speaks concerning His own, "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world." Grace has taken us out of this old world, with its corruption which is there by lust and has put us into another world, so to speak, in which Christ is the center and the attraction. That new sphere is our place. The only way to escape this world with its beguiling influences is by separation from it. And that separation becomes real when we know Him, as the fathers know him, and find our joy and our satisfaction in Christ. "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." But if this exhortation was needed in John's day, how much more is it needed in our days, when, as never before, the god of this age blinds the eyes of them that believe not, when this world system, in its godless and seductive character, develops a power and attraction unknown before, and when on all sides professing Christians are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

III. Truth and Error. Verses 18-27.

This section contains a warning which is addressed to the babes, the little children, young believers. Truth and error, are contrasted. Seducers were trying to lead them astray, for we read in verse 26: "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you." He reminds them that it is "the last time," a striking expression, for since it was written centuries have come and gone, and what was true then is true now, that it is the last time; only the Lord is still patiently waiting, not willing that any should perish.

Christ was manifested, the truth revealed in Him and the world rejected Him and His truth. Satan became the god of this age, with the mystery of iniquity working in it from the very beginning. Antichristianity is not a new thing of our times; it was here from the very beginning. John writes, "Even now there are many antichrists, whereby we know it is the last time." And the last time has its "last days" which are now upon us. Antichristianity is increasing on all sides till *the* antichrist, the man of sin, will be revealed (2 Thess. ii). An antichrist is not a vicious lawbreaker, an out and out immoral man. An antichrist is one who rejects Christ, who does not allow His claims; who denies that Jesus is the Son of God. It is of great significance that John speaks of the antichrists in his day as having gone out from among the professing body of Christians (verse 19). They were not true believers but only professed belief; they had left the flock and gone into apostasy, "that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

In verses 21 and 22 we have a picture of the antichrists of John's day and a prophecy of antichristianity down to the end of the age when the great opposer will appear in a person, the personal antichrist. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son hath not the Father. He who confesseth the Son hath the Father also." Antichristianity is the denial that Jesus is the Christ. It includes every denial of the Person of the Lord Jesus, the denial that He is the Son of God come into the flesh, His Virgin birth and that He was sent by the Father. Such denials were prominent in John's lifetime. Gnosticism was troubling the Church. They denied the Messiahship and Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Other systems were present in embryo, known later by the name of Arianism, etc. Denying the Son they denied the Father also. These are important statements for our own days, the last days of the present age. What began in the days when the Holy Spirit penned this Epistle is now full-grown in the world. It is all about us in various forms throughout the professing

Church, only with this difference, the apostates in the beginning were more honest than the apostates in our times. They were in the professing Church and when they began their denials they went out, separated themselves from the true Church. The apostates of today remain in the professing Church and maintain outwardly a Christian profession, so that it becomes the solemn duty of true believers to separate themselves from these enemies of the Cross of Christ. They deny both the Jewish Hope, which centers in the promises of the Messiah, and the Christian Hope, which is the Father and the Son. They reject the truths of the Old and the New Testament. They speak of the God of Abraham, who promised the seed to come from Abraham, as a tribal god. They make common cause with the Jewish apostates in denying that there are predictions concerning the Messiah in the Old Testament. We give but one illustration of this fact. Jews deny that the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is a Messianic prophecy; the servant of Jehovah is explained to mean the nation Israel and not the Christ of God. This infidel view is held today by many preachers and teachers in various evangelical denominations, in spite of the fact that the New Testament tells us that it is Christ of whom Isaiah spoke. Rejecting Isaiah vii:14, the prophecy concerning the Virgin birth, they reject the Virgin birth itself, and brazenly utter the greatest blasphemy which human lips can utter, that Christ was born like any other man. They speak of Him as a great leader and teacher, as having divinity in Himself, in a degree higher than found in the rest of the race. His absolute Deity is not believed; that He is the propitiation for sins is sneered at, that He will ever appear again in His glorified humanity in a second visible and glorious manifestation is ridiculed. Thus antichristianity is present with us in the camp of Christendom in such a marked and universal way as unknown before.* With denying Christ they deny the Father. All

*Many college professors and presidents of institutions lean towards this side. We mention Shailer Mathews, of Chicago; President King, of

that we have seen in this Epistle concerning Him, the true God and the eternal life, fellowship with the Father and with His Son, walking in the light, the advocacy of Christ and loving the brethren, is denied by them. They speak of "love;" they speak of toleration and the "Christ-spirit." But those who are the brethren, who contend for the faith once and for all delivered unto the Saints, who believe on the Son of God, in His sacrificial work on the Cross, are denounced by them, belittled and branded as fanatics. And the end is not yet. Let them continue in their evil ways under the guidance of the lying spirit of darkness and they may yet stoop to actual persecution of those who constitute the body of Christ. The conditions in Christendom today are the most solemn the true Church of Jesus Christ has faced. The heading up in "*the* Antichrist" cannot be far distant. As John writes these Christ-deniers, these blasphemers, who make the Holy Son of God the offspring of—we dare not finish the sentence!—may speak of "the Father," but they have not the Father, because only those who confess the Son of God, Christ come in the flesh, have the Father.

John writes all this to the babes, young believers, warning them against the lie. He useth the word "liar," for such the apostates are. In using this word repeatedly, he reveals his character as "Boanerges"—the son of thunder. Then he tells these babes how they may be guarded and kept. He reminds them that they have the anointing of the Holy One, that is, the Holy Spirit dwelling in their hearts and with Him they have the capacity to know and judge all these things. If they follow His guidance in and through the Word they would be kept in the Truth and guarded from accepting the lie. Let us again remember it is not the fathers, or the young men John addresses, but the babes. Here is a strong argument against the teaching so widespread among true believers, that the Holy Spirit is not given to a believer in regeneration, but that the gift of the Spirit

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Oberlin; Harry E. Fosdick, of Union Seminary; President Hibben, of Princeton; Dr. Faunce, of Brown University; Professor Charles F. Kent, of Yale; and scores of other rationalists.

must be sought in a definite experience after conversion. This is a serious error which opens the door to the most subtle delusions as found in certain Holiness sects and Pentecostalism. Verse 24 gives another instruction and exhortation. It is the truth concerning Christ, which they had heard from the beginning, which abiding in them will keep them. And besides "the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." The teachers in this instance who tried to seduce them (verse 26) were not gifts of Christ to His body, but false teachers, who came with a lying message. They did not need these teachers; the Holy Spirit was their teacher and infallible guide, but never apart from the written Word. All false teaching they were to repulse and fall back upon Him who guides in all truth. They were safe against all error as they abided in that.

IV. Righteousness and Love as Manifested by the Children of God.

Chapter ii:28—iii:18.

1. The Children of God and Their Coming Manifestation. ii:28; iii:3.
2. Sin and the New Nature. 4–9.
3. Righteousness and Love. 10–18.

1. The Children of God and Their Coming Manifestation: Verses ii:28—iii:3. The address to the babes in Christ ended with the 27th verse, and now once more he speaks of the *teknia*, the little children, by which all believers are meant. The exhortation has been much misunderstood. It does not mean that by abiding in Him the believer may have confidence at His appearing. John speaks of himself and other servants of Christ, who minister the Gospel and the Truth of God. He urges the little children to abide in Him, "that when He shall appear *we* may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." He

wants them to walk carefully, to be faithful in all things, so that John and the other servants may not be left ashamed in that coming day. It is the same truth which Paul mentions in 1 Thess. ii:19-20.

Verse 29 mentions the test of righteousness. It is an acid test. "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him." But the purpose of it is not to question the reality of their salvation as born again, to make them doubt, but the test is given so that they might be enabled to reject a spurious profession. Before he proceeds with the truth expressed in this verse, he mentions the fact that as born of God they are the children of God and what they shall be.

In verses 1 and 2 the words "sons of God" must be changed to "*children of God.* John never speaks of "sons of God" in his message. It is in the writings of Paul the Holy Spirit speaks of believers as "sons and heirs." But John unfolds the truth that believers are in the family of God by the new birth, hence the use of the word "children" to denote the community of nature as born of God. As children of God we are partakers of the divine nature. It is the love of the Father which has bestowed this upon all who believe. And most emphatically the Spirit of God assures us through the pen of John, "Now are we the children of God." There can be no doubt about it, it is our present and known position, because having believed on Him we are born again and are in possession of eternal life. That which we shall be has not yet been manifested, but while it is not yet manifested we, nevertheless, know what we shall be. But how do we know? We know it because the Holy Spirit has revealed it in the Word of God. "But we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." This is our blessed assurance! To this God has called us; it is "the Hope of His calling" (Ephesians i:18). It is that to which we are predestined, to see Him as He is and then infinitely more than that "to be like Him." We see Him now by faith in His Word and are changed into the same image from glory to glory; when we shall see Him in

that soon coming day, when He comes for His Saints, we shall see Him bodily and then our bodies will be fashioned like unto His glorious body. Of all this the world knows nothing. It knew Him not, knew not His life, nor His glory; it does not know the life which is in the children of God and what glory awaits them. And this hope is a purifying hope. We see that John speaks of the blessed Hope as Peter and James, addressing Jewish believers, do not.

2. **Sin and the New Nature: Verses 4-9.** He makes a contrast between sin and the new nature and shows the marks of one who abides in Christ and one who hath not seen Him neither knows Him. "Every one that practiseth sin, practiseth lawlessness; for sin is lawlessness," this is the correct rendering. The definition of sin as "transgression of the law" is misleading and incorrect. Before there ever was a law, sin was in the world (Romans v:12, etc.); how then can sin be the transgression of the law? It is not *sins* of which John speaks, but *sin*, the evil nature of man. Here the Apostle regards man as doing nothing else but his own, natural will; he lives as a natural man. He acts independently of God, and, as far as he is concerned, never does anything but his own will. John is, therefore, not speaking of positive overt acts, but of the natural man's habitual bent and character, his life and nature. The sinner, then, sins, and in this merely shows in it his state and the moral root of his nature as a sinner, which is lawlessness. But the born one, the child of God, is in a different position. He knows that Christ was manifested to take away our sins and that in Him there was no sin. If one knows Him and abideth in Him, that one sinneth not. If the believer sins it is because he has lost sight of Christ and does not act in the new life imparted unto him. Another object usurps the place of Christ, and then acting in self-will he is readily exposed to the wiles of the devil using his old nature and the world to lead him astray. If a man lives habitually in sin, according to his old nature, he hath not seen Him nor known Him. A child of God may sin but he is no longer living in sin; if a professing believer lives constantly in sin

it is the evidence that he has not known Him at all. There were such who tried to deceive them. Their teaching was evidently a denial of holiness, that there was no need of righteousness. But the demand is for righteousness, while those who practise sin, live habitually in it, are of the devil. No true believer lives thus, for he knows the One whose life he possesses was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.

"Whosoever is begotten of God doth not practise sin, because his seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God." This verse has puzzled many Christians, but it is quite simple. Every creature lives according to its nature. The fish has the nature of a fish and lives its nature in the water; a bird has its own nature and lives it in the air, and not under the water as the fish. Our Lord said to Nicodemus "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." Man has a fallen nature, the nature of sin, and that nature can do nothing but sin. That is why He said "Ye must be born again." In the new birth the divine nature is imparted. This nature is He Himself, Christ, the eternal life. Christ could not sin for He is God, and God cannot sin. The new nature believers possess cannot sin, for it is His nature. But why do new-born ones sin? Because the Christian has two natures, the old nature and the new nature. The old nature is not eradicated; a believer when he sins does so because he has given way to that old nature, has acted in the flesh. But the new nature followed will never lead to sin, for it is a holy nature, and for that nature it is impossible to sin. Some have suggested out of ignorance that the translation ought to be instead of cannot sin "ought not to sin," or "should not sin." The Greek text does not permit such a translation, anything different from "cannot sin" is an unscriptural paraphrase.

3. Righteousness and Love: Verses 10-18. The test as to the children of God and the children of the devil follows in this section. Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. The message from the beginning, that is the same beginning as in chapter

i:1—is that we should love one another. This was the commandment given by the Lord, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John xv:12). There is natural affection in the world, even in the animal creation. The natural man also can make himself amiable and speak of love and toleration. In fact an amiable character, a loving disposition through self-improvement is urged and practised among the antichristian cults, such as New Thought, Christian Science and the Liberalists, the advocates of the new theology. But the love of which John speaks is exclusively of God and unknown to the natural heart of man. Yet all these antichrists go to the Epistle of John and quote him to confirm their evil doctrine of "the brotherhood of man and the universal fatherhood of God." John does not speak of loving man as such, but loving the brethren, the other born ones in the family of God, and that is a divine love. It is the great test of the divine nature, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." The world not only knows nothing of that divine love, but the world hates those who are born of God. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." This fact is illustrated by Cain. He was of the devil. He slew his brother because Cain's works were evil, he was an unbeliever, and his brother's were righteous, Abel believed and that was counted to him for righteousness. And so the world hates the brethren, the children of God on the same ground and for the same reason. Then again he tests profession: "He who loveth not his brother abideth in death. . . . Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." Hating the brother is the evidence that the professing Christian is in the state of death and linked with the murderer from the beginning.

The better rendering of verse 16 is, "Hereby we know love, because He laid down His life for us." Such love must be manifested in a practical way towards the brethren.*

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*"But 'we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.' Not because we love *certain* of the brethren,

V. Hereby We Know.

Chapters iii:10—v:13.

1. Hereby we know that we are of the Truth. Verses 19-24.
2. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. iv:1-4.
3. Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth and of Error. 5-6.
4. The Love manifested toward us. 7-19.
5. The final Tests as to the Possession of Eternal Life. iv:20; v:13.

1. Hereby we know that we are of the Truth: Verses 19-24. If the love of God dwells in the heart of the child of God it must be manifested in a practical way. Love must be expressed in deed and in truth, which is the fruit of true faith. If the believer does this he knows that he is of the truth. If it is lacking he is but an empty professing believer. But if we know that we are of the truth, by bearing such fruit of faith, we can assure our hearts before Him, and we can draw nigh with confidence. As our hearts do not condemn us, knowing that we are of the truth, we have confidence toward God and whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. Where there is not a good conscience and the Holy Spirit is grieved real nearness to

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let us remember. We may love even the children of God for some other reason than *as* His children. We may love them, perhaps, in gratitude to them for services that we may be receiving from them. Further than this, we may mistake for brotherly love that which is merely self-love in a subtler form. Men minister to our comfort, please us, and we think we love them; and in the true child of God there may be yet, after all, as to much that he counts love to the brethren, a similar mistake. A love to the children of God, as such, must find its objects wherever these children are, however little may be, so to speak, our gain from them; however, little them may fit ot our tastes. The true love of the children of God must be far other than sociality, and cannot be sectarian. It is, as the Apostle says, 'without partiality, and without hypocrisy.' This does not, of course, deny that there may be differences that still obtain. He in whom God is most seen should naturally attract the heart of one who knows God according to the Apostle's reasoning here. It is God seen in men whom we recognize in the love borne to them; but, then, God is in all His own, as the Apostle is everywhere arguing; and, therefore, there is nothing self-contradictory in what has just been said."—F. W. Grant.

God and the effectual prayer which availeth much are impossible. It is the same blessed truth our Lord spoke in connection with the parable of the vine. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv:7).

But what is His commandment? Strange that some expositors have read into it the ten commandments. The context answers the question: "And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment. And He that keepeth His commandment dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit He hath given to us."

2. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: iv:1-4. The last sentence of the preceding chapter gives the assurance that the believer has the Holy Spirit. There is no such thing as a true child of God without the Holy Spirit. The indwelling Spirit is the proof that He Himself dwells in us. But how do we know that it is the Spirit of God? How can a test be made? The sphere of the Spirit is the territory in which the spirit of error and darkness operates and where the liar from the beginning counterfeits. Many false prophets inspired by the spirit of darkness had gone out into the world and the Apostle gives a warning not to believe every spirit but to try the spirits.* The true test is the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. But this means more

*"The false prophets are certainly no fewer in number at the present time than when the Apostle spoke; yet, in general, we may say they assume less divine authority. We have sunk down so far into the wisdom of the world that man is credited with a place which God has lost. Inspiration is the inspiration of genius, rather than of God. We are more and more getting to lose the reality of the last, just as we are coming more and more to believe in the former. We believe in brilliancy, in eloquence, in intellect, in whatever you please in this way, but the assumption of speaking in any direct way by the Spirit of God no more exists, for the mass, except as one may say that the Spirit of God is as liberal as men are, and speaks in very diverse fashion—in poets, philosophers, and all the acknowledged leaders among men." —Numerical Bible.

than a mere confession with the lips, it means to own the Person and Lordship of Jesus Christ our Saviour. The demons know how to confess Him and yet they are demons (Matthew vii:29). The spirit of antichrist denies Him, does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This spirit which is not the Spirit of God manifests itself in the most subtle forms. It is called "true Christian charity" in our days to make common cause in what is called "social service" with those who do not confess Christ, who do not own Him as Saviour and Lord. These many antichrists speak of Him as man, they go so far as to call Christ a manifestation of God in human form, but they deny that He is very God come in the flesh. As stated before the most prominent form of it is today the denial of His Virgin birth. Anything which denies the full glory of the Lord Jesus Christ which in any way detracts from His glory, is the spirit of antichrist. About a hundred years ago a movement was in existence which claimed to be another Pentecost, just as there are movements today which claim the same unscriptural thing. The leader of that movement, Edward Irving, put great stress upon the incarnation, that Jesus came in the flesh. But after a while the demons which stood behind the movement brought forth the horrible doctrine of the peccability of Christ, that He had a corrupt nature like any other man. Such is the subtilty of Satan, the old serpent. He always strikes at Christ and His glory.

3. **Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error: Verses 5-6.** The fifth verse has a good description of these antichrists and their following. These men, with their boasted learning and scholarship, their great swelling words, called eloquence, their natural amiability and cultured, courteous manners are of the world. They were never born again. If they had ever seen themselves lost and undone, and found in Christ their peace with God, they would yield complete obedience to Him and not deny His glory. When they speak they speak of the world. They speak of world conditions, and how they may be improved, of a better human society. Quite true they are even religious, but

what they speak is not that which is of the Spirit, but what concerns the world system. The crowds want to hear that for it pleases the flesh and thus the devil brings his audience to hear them. Such antichrists in cap and gown have multiplied by the thousands; they are found in the leading pulpits of all denominations.

The test as to the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error is stated in these words: "We are of God; He that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not. Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth and of error." The test is the Apostle's doctrine. The Epistles are the full revelation of the doctrine of Christ, they contain the "many things" which the Lord spoke of when on earth, and which should be revealed when the Holy Spirit came. He has come and has made known the blessed things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him, but which are now revealed by His Spirit, the Spirit of Truth (1 Corinthians ii:9-10). The spirit of error denies these doctrines. In our day the enemy has invested a most subtle slogan, "Back to Christ." It sounds well but behind it stands the father of lies. These men who speak of going back to Christ charge our beloved brother Paul with having a theological system of his own, which they claim Christ, on earth, never taught. They reject the great redemption truths made known by the Lord through the Apostle to the Gentiles. Their cry "Back to Christ" is the spirit of antichrist.

4. The Love Manifested Towards Us: Verses 7-19. These blessed words are addressed to the beloved, true believers. The great center of this passage is "God is Love." Love is of God. But how do we know that God is Love? Such an antichristian system as "Christian Science" babbles about the Love of God, but that which alone expresses the Love of God, and by which it is known that God is Love they reject completely. The question, how do we know that God is Love? is answered in verses 9 and 10. "In this was manifested the Love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live

through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Apart from this there is no knowledge of the love of God. He who is born again knows that love, for in believing it (John iii:16) he receives eternal life, and that love was perfect in Him when we had no love for Him—not that we loved God, but that He loved us. In His great love He has met every need. This love, the nature of God, is in those who are born again. Every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." Love therefore is the very essence of the new nature and must be manifested towards all who are the objects of the love of God and are in the family of God by having believed that love. "His presence, Himself, dwelling in us rises in the excellency of His nature above all the barriers of circumstances, and attaches us to those who are His. It is God in the power of His nature which is the source of thought and feeling and diffuses itself among them in whom it is. One can understand this. How is it that I love strangers from another land, persons of different habits, whom I have never known, more intimately than members of my own family after the flesh? How is it that I have thoughts in common, objects infinitely loved in common, affections powerfully engaged, a stronger bond with persons whom I have never seen, than with the otherwise dear companions of my childhood? It is because there is in them and in me a source of thoughts and affections which is not human. God is in it. God dwells in us. What happiness! What a bond! Does He not communicate Himself to the soul? Does He not render it conscious of His presence in love? Assuredly, yes. And if He is thus in us, the blessed source of our thoughts, can there be fear, or distance, or uncertainty, with regard to what He is? None at all. His love is perfect in us."*

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*J. N. Darby.

His love is perfected in us by loving one another. Once more he uses the phrase "Hereby we know." "Hereby we know that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." "The Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the indwelling Spirit." He proceeds: "We have seen and testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in Him and he in God." What wonderful words these are! Can there be anything greater and more wonderful than dwelling in God and God dwelling in us! And this is true of every believer. If we confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, if we rest in His finished work as well, knowing the Father sent Him to be the Saviour, and our Saviour therefore, then the Holy Spirit dwells in us and as a result God dwelleth in us and we in God. There can be no question about it for God says so. The enjoyment of it is a different matter. If it is not real to us and if we do not enjoy it there is something which hinders it in ourselves. If a great king should pay us a visit in our home and dwell there and we do not recognize the fact of the honor and privilege bestowed upon us, and if we do not trouble about it and show our appreciation of it, we would have no enjoyment in such a visit. To have the reality of it and enjoy the wonderful truth that God dwells in us and we in Him we must practise what our Lord said in John xiv:23, "If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode in him." We must dwell in love, the very nature of God, and that love is manifested towards Him and towards the brethren. Verses 12 and 16 make this clear. "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him."

Another important fact is stated in the verses which follow: "Herein hath love been perfected with us, that we have boldness in the day of judgment, because as He is, even so are we in this world. There is no fear in love but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear has torment; and he that

feareth is not perfected in love." It has nothing to do with *our* love, as some take it nor with seeking an experience of being "perfect in love." It is His love which casteth out fear, believing that love and dwelling in it. If we believe and know what God has made us in His infinite grace what Christ is, that as He is so are we, how can we fear anything! The coming day of judgment we await not only without any fear, but with boldness, for the day will only bring the full display of what Christ is and what we are in Him and with Him. The knowledge of His perfect love, the love which has reached down to us and lifted us so high, casteth out all fear.*

5. The Final Tests as to Eternal Life; Verses iv:20—v:13. Once more brotherly love is applied as the test. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." God is in the believer, he is the object of God's love, if therefore the brother is not loved, but hated, it is an evidence that God does not dwell in such a heart and again the beloved disciple brands such an one as a liar.

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God and every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him." This is very logical. Then he gives a counter test to show it is genuine. "By this we know, that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments." If we love God and keep His commandments, we can rest assured that we love

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*"It is a blessed love that Christ came into the world for such sinners as we are. But then there is the day of judgment. When I think of the love, I am all happy; but when I think of the day of judgment, my conscience is not quite easy. Though the heart may have tasted the love, the conscience not being quite clear, when I think of judgment I am not quite happy. This is what is provided for here. 'As He is so are we in this world.' The love was shown in visiting us when we were sinners; it is enjoyed in communion: but it is completed in this, that I am in Christ, and that Christ must condemn Himself in the day of judgment, if He condemns me, because as He is, so am I in the world. I am glorified before I get there. He changes this vile body and makes it like to His glorious body. When I am before the judgment seat, I am in this changed and glorified body; I am like my judge."—Synopsis.

the children of God also. If the soul goes out to Him in love, and it is shown by unreserved fidelity to His will, then love for those begotten of Him, the other members of the family of God, will be the result. "For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous." It is a different thing from the law which is called elsewhere a yoke which no one was able to bear (Acts xv:10). Keeping His commandments means to be obedient to His Word, being subject unto Him in all things, for love to God is the spirit of obedience. But the children of God are in the world, though no longer of it. There are hindrances all about in the world which knew Him not and which knows not the children of God. All in this world is opposition to God and hinders true obedience. But that which is born of God overcometh the world. Our faith is the victory which overcometh the world. What faith is it? It is the faith which is occupied with the Son of God, which yields obedience to Him, does His will. Such a faith is the victory that overcomes the world and its attractions. This is stated in verse 5.

"And He, the Son of God, even Jesus Christ, came by water and blood—not by water only, but by water and blood." "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is Truth" (Verse 6). How beautiful is this passage and what divine perfection it reveals! Only John in his Gospel gives the account of the opened side of our adorable Saviour and that water and blood came forth out of the pierced side. "And he that saw it (John) bare record and his record is true and he knoweth that he saith true that ye might believe" (John xix:35). What the sinner needs is cleansing, a cleansing morally and a cleansing from guilt. The water is for cleansing, the blood telling of expiation cleanses from guilt. To make here of the water baptism, and of the blood the Lord's supper, is as false as it is ridiculous. It is purification and propitiation as accomplished and provided for in the death of Christ for the believer. As a result of the Holy Spirit is here on earth. Note the Apostle John does not put forward his

own testimony here as given in the above passage, but the Holy Spirit Himself beareth witness to it. He is on earth for this purpose to bear witness to Christ and the work of Christ. How awful the rejection of that witness appears in the light of these words—that rejection which is so widespread and pronounced in antichristian modernism! The seventh verse has no business in our Bibles. It must be stricken out. It is an interpolation and all the historical evidences are against it. The oldest manuscripts do not contain these words which we read in verse 7. Leaving out this inserted verse we notice the connection which exists between verse 6 and 8. "And there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three are one." The Spirit is the abiding witness of accomplished redemption, and He dwells in the believer.

Verses 9-13 need no further detailed annotations. They are so plain and simple that only one wilfully blind can misunderstand them. God's witness is concerning His Son. The believer who believes that the Son of God hath the witness in himself, that is, by the indwelling Spirit, and by the salvation he possesses, the new nature, the eternal life. Any man who does not believe God's witness concerning His Son hath made Him a liar. Think of it, dear reader, the creature of the dust makes God, who cannot lie, a liar! This is the heinous sin of the great religious world. The record we have is, that God hath given to us eternal life, that this life is in His Son, that if we have the Son we have life, if we have not the Son we have not life. Verse 13 concludes the argument and teaching of the Epistle concerning eternal life.

VI. Conclusion.

Chapter v:14-21.

The conclusion of this great Epistle mentions first the practical confidence which a believer may have, the outcome of that relationship and fellowship with the Father and His Son, which the doctrinal part so blessedly unfolds. We can come in prayer to Him with boldness and whatever we ask "according to His will He heareth us; and if we know that

He heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of Him." As a loving Father He listens to the cry of His children and He answers if it is according to His will, and the child of God would not have it differently, and desire anything to be granted him which is contrary to the will of God. Our unanswered prayers we joyfully recognize as being not according to His will. It is not true faith when fanatics, like faith curists, say that God *must* do certain things. That is not faith but presumption.

But what is the sin unto death (Verse 16). God chastises the sinning believer often through sickness. And the chastisement may lead to the physical death of the child of God. Such was the case in Corinth (1 Corinth. xi:31). It is the same case as James v:14, 15. If the sin is not unto physical death as a chastisement, we can pray for the brother and he will be restored. But there is a sin unto death. Ananias and Sapphira committed such a sin. No prayer in such a case does avail anything. God in His governmental dealings takes the offender away as to his life on earth. It does not affect the salvation of the soul, as those teach who think that one who has believed, has eternal life, and is a member of the family of God, can be lost again.

The conclusion of the Epistle consists in three statements that "we know": "We *know* that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth Himself and that wicked one toucheth him not." Sin is the touch of the wicked one. If the believer guards himself, by living in the fellowship with the Father and the Son, walking in the Light, the wicked one cannot reach him, he lives according to his new nature and sinneth not." "*We know* that we are of God and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." Hence God's children should be separated from the world. If a believer is not he moves on the very territory of the wicked one and the author of sin finds occasion to touch him and lead him to sin. "*We know* that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in

Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

The final exhortation is "Little children (*teknia*—all God's children), keep yourselves from idols. Amen." What is an idol? Anything and everything that draws the affection and devotion of heart and soul from the Lord Jesus Christ. May He, through the power of His Spirit, keep us all from idols. And we shall be kept if we give in our hearts and lives the pre-eminence to our Lord and walk in the light as He is in the light.

SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF JOHN

Second and Third Epistles of John

Introduction.

We treat these small documents together. No intelligent person can doubt that both Epistles were written by the same person. We do not need to investigate the objections and inventions of rationalists like Bretschneider, those of the so-called Tuebingen school and the modern critics, who deny the Johannine authorship and teach that the fictitious "John the Presbyter of Ephesus" wrote these two letters.

But all these modern conceptions are answered by the ancient authorities which ascribe both Epistles to the writer of the First Epistle, that is, the Apostle John. Irenaeus, who as a boy had listened to Polycarp, who knew John personally, bears witness to the genuineness of the Second Epistle, so does Clement of Alexandria, the Muratorian fragment, Dionysius of Alexandria, and others. Both Epistles seem to have been accepted from the very beginning as the inspired testimony of John.

The internal evidence is conclusive. Both Epistles are in tone, style and vocabulary like the Gospel of John and the First Epistle of John. The great characteristic words of the other writings of John (the Gospel and John I) "Love," "Truth," "World," etc., are found in these two Epistles. They are, indeed, complementary to the First Epistle and give some of the truths contained in the First Epistle in a practical way. The warning contained in the Second Epistle concerning receiving one who does not bring the doctrine of Christ, that is an Antichrist, connects closely with the instructions of 1 John iv. There is no question but both Epistles are appendices to the First Epistle.

The Second Epistle.

The Second Epistle is addressed by the Elder unto the

elect lady and her children. The word elder has the same meaning as it has in 1 Peter v. Some take it that the elect lady means an assembly, and her children the members of the assembly. But that is a very strained application.

The word "Kyria" (lady) excludes this meaning, besides other reasons which we do not follow here. She was a Christion woman of note, generally known and beloved, having children, whom the Apostle had found walking in the Truth. She had also a sister with children, who seems to have been in the same place where the Apostle was, probably in Ephesus. This is indicated by the last verse of the Epistle, "The children of thy elect sister greet thee." The keynote of this message to the elect lady, unknown by name, is the Word "Truth." The Apostle lets them know that he loves them, as well as all other believers in the truth. That is the ground of real love, every child of God—man, woman or child—is best beloved for the sake of the truth, the blessed truth so abundantly poured forth in the First Epistle, the truth which is Christ Himself. And that truth "dwelleth in us, and shall be with us forever." Thus the truth known binds together in closest fellowship all who know Him. Then follows a blessed greeting, "Grace, mercy and peace shall be with you, from the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love." The statement, "the Son of the Father" is unique; it is not found elsewhere in the New Testament and is in full keeping with the object of this little Epistle, for the denial of Christ coming in the flesh, and the warning against these deceivers, is the chief message of the Epistle. The great joy of the Apostle was that he found them walking in the truth, that the children of the elect lady walked according to the commandment received from the Father (1 John iii:24). Having the truth necessitates walking in the truth. One who claims to have the truth and does not walk in it, shows that he does not know the truth in his heart. But walking in the truth is the result of having and knowing the truth.

What we have stated before, that these two Epistles are

appendices of the First Epistle, is seen by the fifth verse (1 John iii:23-24). It is the old and the new commandment. It was old because it was manifested in Christ Himself; new because it is just as true in us as in Him. Divine love flows from love, and reproduces itself in all who know the truth, that is, who know Christ. And this is love that we walk after His commandments. It means obedience to Him, and what else is obedience but love in exercise?

But why does he write all this? With the seventh verse he gives the reason and it is a very solemn one, indeed. Well may we look to these words in our own days for they have a great meaning for the children of God living in these closing days, as they had a meaning in the beginning of the dispensation. "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come into the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Antichrist." This was true in the beginning of the age, and all through the present age the old serpent has made its many attempts to attack Christ and foster the lies concerning His Person and Glory, but never before has this been so evident as in our own days. The reason is because the age is about to end. Denying that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh was mentioned by John in his First Epistle (Chapter iv). It includes all phases of evil doctrines concerning Christ, the Son of the Father. It is a denial of His essential Deity, His true humanity, His Virgin birth, His infallibility, His holy character, His physical resurrection, and His bodily presence in Glory. We need not mention again how many such antichrists are about in these days. And John brands them in plain words as deceivers. No matter what names they have, what scholarship and honors they claim, what beautiful characters they have assumed as natural men, if they deny anything about Christ, they are deceivers. He calls, therefore, to look diligently whether some of this awful leaven is not affecting them. If in any way they were contaminated with it they, John and the fellow teachers, might lose the full reward. (See 1 John ii:28). Then follows the instructions in verses 9-11.

"Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." Even the smallest error about the Person of Christ is a transgression of the doctrine of Christ and if followed will lead to a complete rejection of the truth, as it has been so often seen in cases of apostates. Such deniers have not God, while he who abideth in the doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son. After this declaration comes a divine command which is just as binding as any other command in the Word of God. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not in your house, neither bid him Godspeed; for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds." This is strong language and yet not too strong when we remember what is at stake. Any one who brings not the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine as unfolded in the previous Epistle, concerning Christ the Son of God come in the flesh, dying for sinners and all that clusters around it, is an antichrist. Furthermore he makes God a liar and in denying the doctrine of Christ robs God of His glory and man of his salvation. And every man who denies the Virgin Birth, or teaches the peccability of Christ, or denies His physical resurrection is such a one. He must be shunned. Fellowship with him is an impossibility. He is not to be welcomed to any Christian home, nor is he to be given the common greeting. If met anywhere there is to be no acknowledgment whatever, not even a "Good Morning" or "Good Night." This is the meaning of the expression "Godspeed." But is not this intolerant? Yes, the intolerance of divine love. If such deceivers are welcomed and fellowship is had with them even in the slightest degree, the believer puts his sanction on a denier of Christ. God will hold all responsible who fellowship any man, any set of men, any institution or anything else, which deny His Son and His Glory. This is unpalatable to many. Nowadays it is called "Christian charity and broadmindedness" to mingle with Unitarians, Critics and baptized infidels of various descriptions. His honor and glory is in the background. Happy are we if

we stand firm and refuse such fellowship, practising this divinely given injunction by the Apostle of Love. God will be our rewarder.

"Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink, but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. The children of the elect sister greet thee. Amen." Thus ends the Second Epistle.

The Third Epistle

The Third Epistle is addressed by the elder, the aged Apostle John, to a brother by name of Gaius. A Gaius is mentioned in Acts xix:20; xx:4; Romans xiv:23 and 1 Corinthians i:14. It is impossible to say whether this is the same. John calls him well-beloved, whom he loved in the truth. Thus he emphasizes the truth once more as he had done before. He wishes that he might prosper in his body, in health, as even his soul prospered. He had heard from the brethren who testified of the truth in him and that he walked in the truth. He rejoiced in this and declares "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." And this is not only the aged Apostle's joy, but it is the joy of the Lord. How He must rejoice when His beloved children in whom He dwells walk in truth! Gaius had been very gracious and hospitable. Perhaps the brethren who gave such a good report to John were the recipients of Gaius's kindness. They had witnessed before the assembly how faithful he was in entertaining them, helping them on their journey in every way possible. He had done this not only with the brethren in his locality, but with brethren who were strangers, ministering servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, who went forth for His Name's sake, taking nothing of the Gentiles. In going forth in ministering the Word they depended on the Lord. The evil of today, even among those who preach the truth, of demanding so much money for so much service was unknown in the Church. Nowhere do we read in the New Testament of a "salaried" ministry. The evils of

going to the world for support of the Lord's work, or using the methods of the world are widespread and detrimental to true faith and a true testimony to the truth. The work of the Lord and the servants of Christ are to be supported only by the Lord's people and not by the unsaved. Such, then, who go forth for His Name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles (those who are outside) are to be received and those who receive them, help them on their journey as Gaius did, are fellow helpers to the truth. They are going to share in that coming day in the fruit of their labors. This is the true fellowship in the truth, as Paul expressed it in Galatians, "Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teaches in all good things" (Galatians vi:6). It is in contrast from what the Second Epistle demanded—withdrawal from those who bring not the doctrine of Christ, a complete separation from them; but here it is identification with those who know the truth and teach the truth.

This is a bright picture presented in Gaius. Alas! there is another side in this Third Epistle. There was one by name of Diotrephes. His name means "Nourished of God." Of him John writes as follows: "I wrote unto the church, but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, received us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words; and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and casteth them out of the church." We let another speak on this. "We have another evil designated very clearly here. Diotrephes is the Scriptural example of the clerical tribe, as contra-distinguished from the ministry of Christ. There is no service, because there is no love. He is the representative of the spirit which opposes the free action of the Holy Spirit, setting itself even against apostolical authority in order to gain or maintain his own individual pre-eminence. Self-importance, jealousy of those over us, impatience of others equally called to serve, scorn of the assembly, yet sometimes humoring the least worthy for its own ends—such are the charac-

teristics of clericalism. I do not mean in clergymen only; for there are men of God incomparably better than their position tends to make them; as on the other hand this evil thing is nowhere so offensive as where the truth that is owned, wholly condemns it."* Diotrephes wanted to be the leader of the assembly, a kind of a pope in embryo. He loved the pre-eminence and this self-love and seeking to maintain his position led him to act so outrageously that he excommunicated the brethren and dared to rise up against the Apostle himself. What harm such jealousies, self-seeking, self-glorification and ecclesiastical bossism have worked and are working in the body of Christ! and nowhere so much as in circles where the full truth is known and confessed. But why did Diotrephes love to have the pre-eminence? Because, unlike the Apostle and the beloved Gaius, he did not give the Lord Jesus Christ the pre-eminence in all things; he did not walk in the truth. When the Lord comes, before His judgment-seat, all these things will be brought to light and dealt with by Him.

John does not leave us with the sad picture of Diotrephes. 'Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God; but he that doeth evil hath not seen God." It is another one of the tests as we found them in the First Epistle. Doing good is the active service of love. God does not do evil, but He does good, hence if we do good as believers in the truth, we are of God. Then he mentions Demetrius. Perhaps he was one of the servants who went about doing good, preaching the truth, and whom Diotrephes would not receive. How blessed that the Holy Spirit through John's letter endorses and recommends him. "Demetrius hath good report of all, and of the truth itself; yea, and we also bear record, and ye know that our record is true." Such is the comfort of all true servants who walk in the truth, that the Lord knoweth. "I have many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee. But I trust I shall shortly see thee,

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*William Kelly on Third John.

and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name." Both Epistles end, with a coming face to face meeting. Let us remember there is to be some blessed day a "face to face" meeting, when the Saints of God will meet together for eternal fellowship, but above all when we shall be face to face with Him. How soon it may be! But while we wait for that meeting may we walk in the light and in the fullest enjoyment of our fellowship with the Father and with His Son, our blessed Lord. To Him be glory and dominion for ever. Amen.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

The Epistle of Jude

Introduction

The Epistle of Jude is the last epistle preceding the great final book with which the Holy Scriptures conclude, the book of Revelation. We believe the place given to this epistle is the right one, for, as we shall see, it reveals the conditions, religiously and morally, which prevail on earth before the great coming event takes place, of which Revelation has so much to say. Some have called it "the preface to the Revelation."

The Author

We are not left in doubt who the writer is, for he mentions himself in the beginning of it. It is Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James. But who is this Jude or Judas? Among the disciples were two by the name of Judas. There was Judas Iscariot, who ended his miserable career, after he had become the instrument of the devil, by hanging. In John xiv:22 we read, "Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" The Spirit of God makes it plain that Judas Iscariot did not address Jesus by the name Lord, which expresses faith in His Deity, but that there was another Judas in the apostolate who speaks here. When we turn to the names of the twelve in Matthew x:2-4, we find the name of Judas but once; it is the name of him who betrayed the Lord. The Judas whose words are recorded in the above passage in the Gospel of John, is called in Matthew x:22 "Lebbaeus whose surname was Thaddaeus." In Luke vi:16 and Acts i:13, his name is given as Judas of James; it must be noticed that the words in the authorized version "the brother" are in italics, which means that they are supplied by the translators. It is not so in the first verse of this epistle; here the writer calls himself "brother of James." But there is still another Judas found in the Gospels. His name is recorded in

Matthew xiii:55. "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not His mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?" The James, the brother of the Lord mentioned in this passage, is the author of the Epistle of James. (See introduction to the epistle of James). The question then arises, Is the writer of the epistle before us, the Apostle Judas of James, also called Lebbaeus, surnamed Thaddaeus, or is it Judas, the one who is called one of the Lord's brethren, and therefore the natural brother of James, the writer of the Epistle of James? Some maintain that Jude is the Apostle Judas, while others see in Jude the brother of James, as given in Matthew xiii:55. We endorse the latter view. We give the reasons why the writer of this epistle cannot be the Apostle Judas.

1. He does not speak of Himself as an Apostle. He designates himself as a servant of Jesus Christ. Whenever an Apostle calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ, he adds his apostleship, as we learn from Romans i:1; Titus i:1; 2 Peter i:1. The only exception is the epistle to the Philippians, in which Paul associates with himself in the address Timothy, and then speaks of himself and Timothy as servants of Jesus Christ.

2. If he were the Apostle Judas, the brother of the Apostle James, the sons of Alphaeus, we have to face great difficulties, as Dean Alford states, involving the wholly unjustifiable hypothesis, that those who are called in Scripture the brethren of our Lord were not His brethren, but His cousins, sons of Alphaeus (Cleopas).

But why does the writer of this epistle not speak of himself as "the brother of the Lord?" it has been asked. James does not do so in his epistle either. He is silent about this relationship and so is his brother Jude. "The question, Why does not Jude mention his earthly relationship to the Lord shows great ignorance of the true spirit of the writers of the New Testament. It would be the last thing I should expect, to find one of the brethren of the Lord asserting this relationship as a ground of reception for an epistle. Almost all agree that the writer of the epistle of James was the

person known as the brother of the Lord. Yet there we have no designation. It would have been in fact altogether inconsistent with the true spirit of Christ (Luke xx:27, 28), and in harmony with those later susperstitious feelings with which the next and following generations regarded His earthly relatives. Had such a designation as "*Adelphos tou Kyriou*" (brother of the Lord) been found in the address of an epistle, it would have formed a strong à priori objection to its authenticity."*

Jude is therefore the one mentioned in Matthew xiii:55. Apart from this epistle we know nothing more of him. The date of the epistle is about the year 65.

Its Authenticity

It is authenticated by different ancient sources. The Muratorian fragment mentions it as Jude's Epistle. Clement of Alexandria cites it as Scripture, as well as Tertullian and others. The theories of some objecting critics need not to be considered.

To whom the epistle was originally addressed is not stated. Some have surmised that like James and the Petrine Epistles Jude addressed originally Jewish believers. This may be true, for Jude mentions, prominently, like Peter, Old Testament facts, besides some Jewish traditional matters, which thereby are confirmed as facts. Concerning the apocryphal writings, especially the Book of Enoch, which Jude is charged with having used in the composition of his epistle, we shall have more to say in the annotations.

Jude and 2 Peter Chapter II

As stated in the introduction to the second Epistle of Peter, Jude's testimony is very much like the testimony of the Apostle Peter in the second chapter of his second epistle. Hence there has been a long controversy whether

*Prolegomena

Jude copied from Peter or Peter copied from Jude. We have stated before that if Jude had copied from Peter, his epistle could not be an inspired epistle, and so if Peter copied from Jude. Jude may have known Peter's Epistle, but that does not mean that he used Peter's Epistle, but the Holy Spirit gives a similar testimony through Jude, which is, after a closer examination, somewhat different from Peter's epistle. This is pointed out in the annotations.

The Message of Jude

It seems about the time when Jude wrote his letter a departure from the faith set in among believers. This is confirmed by the fact that other epistles written about the same time give warnings of the same nature as those given by Jude. The message of Jude may be called a prophetic history of the apostasy of Christendom from its beginning in apostolic days down to the end of the age, when the complete apostasy will be dealt with and completely destroyed by the coming of the Lord. It is the darkest forecast of the end of the age which the Spirit of God has given in the epistles. While apostasy and antichristianity have held sway all through the history of Christendom, there is coming in the end of this age a consummation, the evils of which are pictured by the Holy Spirit through the pen of Jude. We know that we are living right in the midst of the fulfillment of Jude's message. The epistle is, therefore, of great importance for our times.

Analysis and Annotations

I. The Introduction: Verses 1-2. Jude in his brief introduction speaks of the Christian believers, whom he addresses, as called ones, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ. The latter statement may also be translated "kept for Jesus Christ." What was true of the believers in Jude's day is true of all believers. Especially comforting is the fact, that, no matter how dark the days may be, however strong the current of evil, those who are "the beloved of God called Saints" will be preserved in Jesus Christ and kept for Him as the members of His body, till He comes. He keeps His own. It is the blessed assurance that the believer's keeping rests in His own hands. In the Revelation we see in the glory vision that Christ holds seven stars in His right hand, which is the symbol of the hand of His power with which He keeps His own. Then there is the prayer that "mercy, and peace, and love may be multiplied."

11. The Purpose and Occasion of the Epistle: Verses 3-4. "Beloved, giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

It had evidently been upon the heart of Jude to write an epistle to the Christians whom he knew. He gave all diligence to carry out his intention. This must mean that he prayed and thought over this matter. He then decided to write about the common salvation. This is the Gospel.

It is the nearest and the dearest object to every believer, for it is the matchless story of God's love. It reveals the Son of God, our Lord, who died for our sins, who was buried and rose again the third day. There are blessed depths and heights in this Gospel, the salvation which believers have in common, which have never yet been measured. Jude

thought to make this the theme of his epistle. Then something happened. The power which was to guide his pen constrained him to write about something else. The Holy Spirit constrained him to exhort Christians to contend earnestly for the faith once and for all delivered unto the saints. Here is a very fine illustration at the close of the New Testament of how the Word of God was given. Jude had a desire to write about the common salvation; but the Holy Spirit wanted him to write about something else and He constrained him to do so, not in his own words but in words given by God.

What faith is meant? Not a creed or confession of faith as formulated by a denomination, sect or party, but *the* faith, which has been delivered once for all unto the saints. It is the same faith concerning which our Lord asked the question, "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find the faith on the earth?" (Luke xviii:8). It is the faith revealed in the Word of God. The heart of that faith is the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Apostles' doctrine made known by the Holy Spirit; it is therefore the whole body of revealed truth. This faith is given by revelation, a different thing from what is being taught today, as if this faith were the product of a process of evolution through the religious experiences of the race for thousands of years. The truths which man needs cannot be found by searching. This faith is "once for all delivered unto the saints." It is permanent, irrevocable and like Him who has revealed it, unchanging. Nor is this faith delivered to the world, but to the Saints, that is to the body of Christ, the church.

That faith was being corrupted when Jude received the commission to exhort Christians to contend earnestly for it. They were ungodly men, having taken on the Christian profession without possessing the reality of it. The evil they introduced was twofold. They turned the grace of God into lasciviousness and they denied the rights of Christ to be Lord and Master. They professed to believe in grace, but abused it so that they might indulge in their own lusts;

they knew nothing of the power of godliness manifested in holy living and therefore they denied the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. Examples from the Past: Verses 5-10. The Spirit of God reminds them of certain apostasies in past history and how God in judgment dealt with it. If we compare this section of Jude's Epistle with 2 Peter ii:4-8 we shall see at once how both documents differ from each other. Peter speaks first of the angels that sinned; then of Noah and the flood and finally of Sodom and Gomorrha and the deliverance of Lot. Jude on the other hand does not mention Noah at all, nor Lot. He speaks first of the Israelites who had come out of Egypt and were destroyed in the wilderness because they believed not. This is followed by the angels who kept not their first estate; then comes Sodom and Gomorrha and the judgment which fell upon these cities, and finally Jude adds something which is not found elsewhere in the Word of God, the incident about Michael contending with the devil about the body of Moses. It is far fetched with this different testimony which Jude gives to charge him with having copied Peter, or Peter having used Jude.

When we examine these examples of the past, we discover that they are not chronologically arranged. If they were reported according to the time when they happened, Jude, like Peter, should have mentioned first the angels that sinned; after which Sodom and Gomorrha would be in order, followed by the Israelites who fell in the wilderness and after that Michael contending with the devil. Why this unchronological arrangement in this Epistle? There must be a purpose in it. We believe the arrangement is made in the manner as it is to teach us the starting point and the goal of apostasy. It starts with unbelief. The people had been saved out of Egypt, but they believed not and were destroyed in the wilderness, except those mentioned in the Word who believed. Thus all apostasy starts with unbelief in what God has spoken. The angels which kept not their first estate, who left their own habitation, and who are now

chained, are the same angels of whom Peter speaks, those who brought in the corruption described in the opening verses of Genesis vi. They gave up the place assigned to them. This is the next step in the progress of apostasy. Unbelief leads to rebellion against God. Sodom and Gomorrha come next. Here we find the grossest immoralities and going after strange flesh. These vicious things are still in the world, and why are they so prominent in our days? On account of unbelief. Then follows the statement, that these apostates are filthy dreamers who defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. This is lawlessness. This is the goal of all apostasy. The predicted lawlessness with which this age ends is the fruitage of infidelity. Such is the development of apostasy. Unbelief, rebellion against God and his revealed truth, immorality and anarchy. These steps may be traced in our own times.

To show that Michael the archangel would not rail against the fallen angel-prince, now the devil, as these apostates despise dominions, the incident concerning Michael contending against the devil about the body of Moses is introduced. He durst not bring a railing accusation against the former Lucifer, the son of the morning, for Michael still recognized in him the once great and glorious creature. It is stated by some of the early church fathers that this episode was recorded in a Jewish apocryphal book "Assumption of Moses." This book is no longer in existence. Another Jewish tradition has it that Michael had been given the custody of the grave of Moses. Jude does not quote from tradition, nor does he quote from a source now no longer available, or, as others surmise, used one of Zechariah's visions (chapter iii), but the Holy Spirit revealed unto him what actually took place when Moses had died. It seems that Michael the archangel was commissioned by the Lord to conduct the funeral of Moses (Deut. xxxiv:5-6). Then the devil appeared upon the scene claiming the body of the servant of the Lord, for what purpose is not revealed.*

*See Annotation, Vol. I. Deut. xxxiv: 5-6.

And Michael durst not bring against him a railing accusation but said, the Lord rebuke thee. But it is different with these apostates. They are compared with irrational animals, following their natural inclinations.

IV. A further description of the apostates: Verses 11-13. The Spirit of God pronounces a woe upon them. The eleventh verse is of much importance. At the close of the New Testament we are reminded of Cain, the first murderer of the human race. Some expositors claim that his name is introduced here because he is a representative of all bad men; others think that he is mentioned because these apostates hated those who are of the truth, as Cain hated Abel. The way of Cain was the way of unbelief. He did not believe what God had spoken, while Abel believed. He had not faith like Abel, who offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous. Cain was a religious man nevertheless, but his religion may be termed a "blood-less religion." He brought the labor of his hands, that which he had gathered from the land upon which the curse rested. The apostates go in the same way of self-will and in that way they reject the record of God concerning His Son. They have no use for the blood of redemption; the salvation they preach is the salvation of "Do," by character. They rush also greedily after the error of Balaam. Money is the chief object with them. They teach error for reward, knowing all along that their teaching is contrary to the revelation of God. Money, honor and glory from men, self-exaltation and self-gratification are the leading motives of these men. The third characteristic is the sin of Core (Korah). The sin of Korah was open rebellion and opposition against the authority of God and the priesthood He had instituted. These apostates of the last days manifest the same spirit of rebellion and defiance. They have no use for the Lord Jesus Christ as the appointed mediator, priest and advocate. The perdition of Korah will overtake them likewise.

Not Jude, but the Holy Spirit, denounces them in the strongest language. (See annotations 2 Peter ii). They

are doubly dead, first in their own fallen nature, and in the second place by turning their ears from the truth and going into apostasy. They are like trees which give the promise of fruit in an imposing bloom, but which withers away; they do not yield any fruit whatever. They are plucked up by the roots without any hope of a revival. They are like the wild waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame (Isaiah lvii:20-21); wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. The wandering stars in the universe belonged once to some great solar system. They detached themselves and began their wanderings. As they left their center they wandered further and further away, deeper and deeper into the immense space of cold and darkness. So these apostates left the center and became eccentric rushing, like these wandering stars of the heavens, into the outer darkness.

V. The testimony of Enoch: Verses 14-16. The Holy Spirit introduces quite abruptly Enoch, the seventh from Adam. There is a deep spiritual significance in this. Enoch lived as an age was about to close. Before the evil days of Noah, with universal violence, corruption and wickedness, had come, Enoch walked with God and bore a prophetic testimony of what was to come in the future. He suffered on account of the testimony he bore to that generation. The ungodly spoke against him, but he kept on in his walk with God and in his testimony, till the day came when he was suddenly removed from the earth. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him, for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Hebrews xi:5). Enoch represents prophetically the true church living at the close of the age, bearing witness to the coming of the Lord, and waiting in faith for the promised translation. The Spirit of God mentions Enoch for this purpose and for our encouragement.

Much has been made by critics and rationalists about this reference to Enoch. What Jude writes about Enoch is found in a Jewish Apocryphal book by the name of "The

Book of Enoch." The book consists of supposed revelations which were given to Enoch and to Moses. Its object seems to be a vindication of the ways of providence and to set forth the coming and terrible retribution for sinners. The book was known to the early church fathers who refer to it often in their writings. For centuries it seems to have been lost. About the close of the 18th Century an Ethiopian translation was discovered in Abyssinia and translated into English and German. Critics claim that this book of Enoch was used by Jude, inasmuch as he inserted this reference to Enoch, which is almost verbatim found in that book. But according to these critics the book of Enoch was written in the second century and from this they reason that Jude did not write this epistle in the year 65 A. D. But there are other scholars who have ascertained that the Book of Enoch was in existence before Christ. Even if the critics were correct that this book was written in the second century of our era, it is no evidence that Jude could not have written his epistle in the year as stated above. The writers of the book of Enoch might have used Jude's statements about Enoch. The fact that Jude in giving by the Holy Spirit this paragraph concerning Enoch proves the record, whether it was handed down by tradition or written in the book of Enoch, to be true.

VI. The Exhortations: Verses 17-23. These exhortations are for the people of God, whose lot is cast in these predicted evil days. The first exhortation is to remember the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. To hold fast these words and remember them is the great need in the days of apostasy. Peter bears the same witness (2 Peter iii:1-3). Building yourselves up on your most holy faith is the next exhortation. Nothing else is worth while building up for believers living in the last days. Prayer is needed. But it is not prayer *for* the Holy Spirit, for another Pentecost, which is nowhere promised, nor for another baptism with the Spirit, but it is prayer *in* the Spirit. The exhortation "Keep yourselves in the love of God" means to keep oneself in the consciousness in that

fellowship with the Father and with the Son of which John speaks in his first epistle, that is enjoying the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, which means, looking for Himself, for His coming. The final exhortations give instructions as to the believer's attitude towards those who have been led away.

VII. The Conclusion: Verses 24-25. "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

Beautiful doxology with which this epistle ends! His own are being kept in the evil days with which the age closes. They are the preserved in Jesus Christ kept for Him. And while we wait for Him, He is able to keep us not only from falling, but from stumbling. And then comes that day in which He will present His own, His beloved people, whom He bought by His own precious blood. He will present them faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. And what a day of joy and gladness, as well as of glory, it will be, when He shall see the travail of His soul and will be satisfied, the day in which He will present to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blame! (Ephes. v:27).

THE REVELATION

The Revelation

Introduction

This great final Book of the Word of God may well be called the capstone of the entire Bible. A pyramid becomes a pyramid by the great capstone, and the Bible becomes the full and complete revelation of God through this document "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." If this book were not in the Bible, the Bible would be an unfinished book; the issues raised in the preceding documents would be forever unsolved.

This disposes at once of the miserable attempts which have been made by critics and others to eliminate the book of Revelation from the canon of the New Testament. Revelation is a necessity. "A book which offers in some way or other to open up those secrets of God which yet lie hidden in the future, seems wholly in place in our sacred Scriptures. It is towards some such book that our thoughts have been moving as we travelled through the Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles; for all alike point forward to a consummation of all things, to a time when the Kingdom of God shall be finally and completely established, when all creation shall cease to groan and travail, when the inheritance of which we have received the first fruits shall be wholly ours. It is, moreover, towards some such book that our hearts seem to yearn as we travel through the earlier volumes of experience, discovering the contradictions between what should be and what is, accumulating impressions of the Protean forms and tremendous power of wickedness, and craving for the manifestation of triumphant righteousness. Thus both the Christian Bible and the Christian consciousness seem to demand a book of revelation for their completion or satisfaction."*

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*C. Anderson Scott.

The Authorship

The title of the Book as we find it in the King James Version is "The Revelation of St. John the Divine"; the better title would be to take the opening words of the Book and call it "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." But the above title tells us that John is the author. This is confirmed by the book itself, for we read twice in the first chapter that the writer says "John to the seven churches," and again, "I, John, who also am your brother" (i:4, 9). Furthermore, at the close of the book he names himself again: "And I, John, saw these things" (xxii:8). The church down to the middle of the third century has but one testimony as to the authorship of this book, and that is, the Johannine, that John the beloved disciple, the son of Zebedes, wrote this book in the isle of Patmos when banished there. The only exceptions were the Alogians, a heretical sect which also rejected the Gospel of John, and a controversialist by name of Caius.

As it is of much interest to be acquainted with the testimony of the many early witnesses in refutation of the destructive critics, who attack this great book, we give a brief summary of these historical evidences.

The first witness is *Justin Martyr*, who wrote about the year 140 in the Dialogue, "that a certain man, whose name was John, one of the Apostles of Christ, prophesied in an apocalypse (revelation) which came to him that believers should reign a thousand years in Jerusalem." *Melito*, Bishop of Sardis, according to the historian Eusebius, wrote treatises on "the devil and on the Apocalypse of John." This was about the year 170. Then follow the testimonies of *Theophilus*, Bishop of Antioch (180); and *Apollonius*. A greater witness still is Irenaeus. We remind the reader of our introduction to the Gospel of John, and call to mind the fact that Irenaeus was in his youth acquainted with Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John. A number of times Irenaeus speaks of "Ioannes Domini disciplus"—John the disciple of the Lord—and that he had written the Apoca-

lypse. *Tertullian* (about 200 A.D.) refers in his writings four times to the Revelation as being the work of the Apostle John. The so-called *Muratorian* fragments quote from the Revelation, and it can be shown by the context of the passage that the Apostle John was believed to be author. *Clement* of Alexandria (about 200 A.D.) mentions also John, the beloved disciple as the writer of the book. A scholar of Clement was *Origen* (233 A.D.). He made careful research about the canonicity and genuineness of the books of the New Testament. While he reported carefully any doubts or disputes about different books, he has nothing to say about the Revelation and its author. He quotes from the book frequently, and it proves that in his time no question was raised about John being the author. *Hippolytus*, Bishop of Ostia (240 A.D.) quotes John's words many times and does not leave us in doubt that he means the son of Zebedee. Then follow a host of witnesses. The first commentator, as far as we know, of the Revelation was Bishop *Victorinus*. He states positively that the Apostle John wrote the Revelation (about 303 A.D.). *Ephrem Syrus* (about 378), the greatest scholar in the Syrian church, repeatedly in his numerous writings, cites the Revelation as canonical and ascribes it to the Apostle John. The Syrian translation of the Bible, the Peshito, probably made in the second century, does not contain the Book of Revelation, yet Ephrem Syrus possessed the Syrian translation. Scholars who have examined this question say that the Peshito in its original version had the Book of Revelation, and that it was later detached, while others advanced the theory that the Peshito translation may have been made in the first century when the Apocalypse was not yet generally known.

After citing many more witnesses, including Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Augustine and others, Dean Alford says: "The Apostolic authorship rests on the firmest ground. We have it assured to us by one who had companied with men who had known St. John himself; we have it held in continuous succession by Fathers in all parts of

the church. Nowhere, in primitive times, does there appear any counter-tradition on the subject."

The First Critic

This unquestionable historical evidence of the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse was first attacked by Dionysius, the disciple of Origen and Bishop of Alexandria. In the second half of the third century this scholar raised his voice against the solid traditional view, declaring that not the same man could have written the fourth Gospel, the Epistles of John and the Revelation. He also pointed out the contrast between the language, the grammar, and the diction of the Apocalypse and the other writings of the Apostle John. He suggested another man by name of John, a Presbyter of Ephesus, as the author of the Revelation. He spoke of two tombs in Ephesus, one in which the body of the Apostle was buried and in the other John the Presbyter. But Dionysius spoke of this John the Presbyter, yet he was entirely unknown to him. It was a new idea he invented to back up his contention, for such a person was wholly unknown to the ecclesiastical tradition in the church of Alexandria in the middle of the third century. Nor does it appear that his opinion on the authorship of the Revelation made any permanent impression on the Alexandrine church. That this "John the Presbyter" is a fictitious person, who never existed, is fully demonstrated by the entire, the complete disappearance of John the Presbyter from the memory of the church of the second century.

But modern critics like Bleek, Duesterdieck, Ewald and others have seized upon this man of straw and followed the invention of Dionysius about the two Johns. Other critics have gone a step further and reject wholly the tradition that the Apostle John lived and died in Ephesus, thus making the other John the sole outstanding bearer of the name in that community, ascribing to him not only the Book of Revelation but also the Fourth Gospel. Modern critics reject the Johannine authorship of the Revelation. They

hold that a work of small compass, by somebody, nobody knows who wrote it, was worked over by somebody else, then expanded by somebody else, passing through three or four redactions till it took on the form of the book we call "The Revelation." They also claim that at best the Revelation is "a Christian redaction of a Jewish Apocalypse."

The Book also received a strange treatment from the different Reformers. Luther for a time treated the Revelation with suspicion and questioned its inspiration; later he greatly modified this opinion. Zwingli followed the theory of Dionysius and attributed it to another John; he excluded it from the Bible. Calvin, however, believed in its canonicity and upheld the apostolic authorship. Melanchthon did the same.

All the criticism has not affected in the least the truth that John, the Apostle, the author of the Gospel of John and the Epistles, is the author also of the Book of Revelation. The fact is, the Holy Spirit seems to have taken special care to preserve such historical evidences for the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which makes the true authorship and date unimpeachable.

"The Apostolic authorship and canonicity of the Apocalypse were generally accepted, and went unchallenged, until toward the third century. Then contrary views began to make their appearance. But when the evidence, direct and indirect, on either side is weighed in respect of its date, its quantity, its quality, its freedom from bias, the external evidence in favor of the Johannine authorship, outweighs the other at every point."

The Date of the Book

It is interesting to find that modern critics have done the opposite with the date of the Book of Revelation from what they have done with other Bible books. They generally fix the date of a book later than the traditional view holds; but they assign to the Apocalypse an earlier date than that which the church has held in the past. Some have dated it

during the reign of Nero. They do so on account of some particular interpretation of certain historical allusions. Of late some of the critics have adopted the later date, the year 96 A.D., that is, the traditional view held from the beginning. Irenaeus, the friend of Polycarp, who knew John, stated about the year 180 that "the Revelation was seen at Patmos at the end of Domitian's reign." Domitian reigned from 81 to 96 A.D. Then Clement of Alexandria left the testimony behind that John returned from his exile to the island of Patmos on the death of the emperor, which was Emperor Domitian, in the year 96. This is the correct date.

The Message and Interpretation

Revelation is marked out in the beginning as a Book of Prophecy (i:3). Of this we have more to say in the Preface and Key to Revelation, which follows this introduction. Furthermore, the Book is in greater part written in symbolical language, which is a very important fact to be remembered in the interpretation. The message is prophetic, and this message is clothed in symbols, which are not difficult to interpret. Our analysis will show that the accusation brought against this Book, as being disjointed, a veritable chaos, is wholly unfounded. Like all the other Books of the Word of God it has a perfect arrangement.

There are three modes of interpreting this Book, with its prophecies and symbols. The *historical* interpretation claims that the Book covers the entire history of the church and pictures the antagonism of the forces of evil in the world against the church. This method was in vogue during the Reformation period and for several centuries down to the nineteenth, especially during the Napoleonic upheavals, it was the acknowledged method of interpretation. It still has supporters. The Reformators saw in the Antichrist, the beast, the pope and the Romish church. Luther was very strong on that. On the other side, the Catholic exegetes, who also employed the same method, branded Protes-

tantism as the Antichrist, and discovered that the mysterious 666 was contained in the name of Dr. Martin Luther. Then Napoleon was seen by believers living toward the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries as fulfilling the thirteenth chapter in Revelation. Many predictions were made and the different numbers, the three years and a half, etc., applied to the stirring history of that time, just the same as men today are trying to figure out the duration of the "Times of the Gentiles," and when certain events must occur.

The *Preterist* School of interpretation teaches that the greater part of the prophecies of this Book have been fulfilled in the past in the struggles of the past, especially with the struggle of the church with the Roman Empire, and that the victory of the church as foretold in the Book is accomplished. The third school is the so-called *Futurist*. This method of interpretation is the only satisfying one and in full harmony with the entire Prophetic Word. We follow this method in our annotations. Nothing beyond the third chapter of this Book is fulfilled; all is still future, this is the claim of the Futurist school. The two chapters in which the word "church" is exclusively found in Revelation (chapters ii and iii) contain the prophecy concerning the church on earth. This divinely given history of the church is about finished and the predicted events from chapter iv to the end of Revelation are yet to be accomplished. Chapters vi-xix contain the specific prophecy of the end of the age, the last seven years, the unfulfilled 70th week of Daniel's great prophecy. The scripturalness of this interpretation will be readily discovered by reading the "Preface and Key to Revelation."

There are other theories of interpretation. One of them is the Judaizing interpretation of the late Dr. Bullinger, who taught that nothing is fulfilled in the Apocalypse, that the seven churches in Asia are yet to come into existence. We request our readers and students of the Word to study carefully the article which follows this introduction and the analysis of the Book.

PREFACE AND KEY TO THE REVELATION

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him." This is the first sentence with which this last book in God's Word begins. The best title therefore is, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Our Lord received, according to this opening statement, a revelation from God. This must be understood in connection with Himself as the Son of Man. As the Only Begotten He had no need of a revelation; in His Deity He is acquainted with all the eternal purposes. One with God He knows the end from the beginning. But He, who is very God, took on in incarnation the form of a servant, and thus being in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself (Phil. ii:7-8). And as the Man who had passed through death, whom God raised from the dead, and exalted at His own right hand, God gave Him this revelation concerning the judgment of the earth and the glory of Himself. "God raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory" (1 Peter i:21). What this Glory is which He received from God is fully and blessedly revealed in this book. It is the revelation of His acquired Glory and how this Glory is to be manifested in connection with the earth. And this revelation He makes known to His servants, because His own are sharers with Him in all He received from God.

Pre-eminently His Revelation

The Revelation is pre-eminently His revelation; the revelation of His Person and His Glory. "In the volume of the book it is wirtten of Me . . ." (Heb. x:7). Martin Luther asked, "What Book and what Person?" and answered, "There is only one Book—the Bible; and only one Person—Jesus Christ." The whole Book, the Word of God, bears witness of Him, Who is the living Word. He is the center, the sum total and the substance of the Holy Scriptures. The prayerful reader of the Bible will never read in vain if he approaches the blessed Book with the one desire to know Christ and His Glory. His blessed face is seen on every page and the infallible Guide, the Holy Spirit, never fails to satisfy

the longing of the believer's heart to know more of Christ. Inasmuch as this last Bible book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, an "Unveiling" of Himself, we find in it the completest revelation of His Person and His Glory.

It is here where many expositions of Revelation have missed the mark. Occupied chiefly with the symbols of the Book, the mysteries, the judgments and the promised consummation, they have neglected to emphasize sufficiently Him, who throughout this Book is pre-eminently the center of everything. The reader of Revelation does well to read first of all through the entire Book with this object in mind, to see what is said of our Lord, of His Person, His present and His future Glory.

We shall find all the features of His Person and His Work mentioned. He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last (i:11); the Ancient of Days (i:14 compare with Daniel vii:9); the "I Am," that is, Jehovah, "I am He that lieveth" (i:18); the Son of God (vii:18). These terms speak of His Deity. His earthly life in humiliation is touched upon in the statement, "the faithful Witness" (i:5). His death on the cross is likewise mentioned—"He hath washed us from our sins in His blood" (i:5); "He was dead" (i:18); "the Lamb as it had been slain" (v:6); "worthy is the Lamb that was slain" (v:12). He is mentioned twenty-eight times as the Lamb in Revelation and each time it reminds us of the cross and the great work accomplished there. His resurrection is seen, for He is called, "the First begotten from the dead" (i:5), and He speaks of Himself as, "He that was dead, and, behold, I am alive forevermore" (i:18); and again, "these things saith the first and the last, who was dead and is alive" (ii:8).

Then we behold Him "in the midst" in glory, seen face to face by all the redeemed and worshipped by them, as well as by the heavenly hosts and ultimately by every creature, the fulfillment of Phil. ii:10-11, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Rev. v:18-14). After the fifth

chapter we have His revelation as the executor of the decreed judgments. He opens the seals; He sends forth the seven angels with the judgment trumpets and the seven angels with the judgment vials, in which the wrath of God is completed. "The Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son" (John v:22). Then He is seen in the glorious union with the Bride (xix:7-10) and as the victorious Christ who passeth out of heaven followed by the armies of heaven (xix:11-21), conquering the opposing forces of evil, executing the wrath of Almighty God, appearing as King of kings and Lord of lords. The twentieth chapter reveals Him as the reigning Christ. He and His Saints with Him will reign over the earth for a thousand years. And all which follows reveals Him and His Glory as well as the blessed and eternal results of His work.

A Book of Prophecy

Aside from the title of the Book, which indicates that it deals with things future, there is a direct statement which determines its prophetic character. In the first beatitude of the seven which are found in the Book, we read that it is a Book of Prophecy—"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this Prophecy" (i:3). It is known to every intelligent student of the Bible that a good part of it is Prophecy. The great prophecies concerning the people Israel and the nations of the world are found in the Old Testament Scriptures. In the New Testament there is but one Book of Prophecy, the Revelation. As it is the capstone of the entire revelation of God, without which the Bible would be an unfinished book, we find in its pages the consummation of the great Prophecies which were given by the Prophets of God in Old Testament times.

For the study of this New Testament Prophetic Book, the knowledge of the chief content of the Old Testament Prophetic Word is therefore an absolute necessity. For instance, to a Christian who does not have a fair grasp of Daniel's great Prophecies, or is ignorant of the place which

the people Israel hold in the purposes of God, the Book of Revelation is a sealed book, without any possible meaning. This is one of the chief reasons why this Book has suffered so much both from the critics and from the hands of commentators. The Apostle Peter saith, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter i:20-21). The better translation for "private interpretation" is, "its own interpretation." It means that the interpretation of prophecy must be done by comparing Scripture with Scripture. The holy men of God, the prophets, were the instruments of the Holy Spirit and made known God's purposes in a progressive way. To understand any prophecy is only possible by taking the entire Prophetic Word into consideration. That there is a wonderful harmony in the great body of prophetic dispensational truths as found in the Bible we have demonstrated in another volume.* This principle finds its strongest application in the interpretation of the Revelation.

The Three Classes

In 1 Corinthians x:32 the Apostle Paul speaks of three classes into which the human race is divided: the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God. In the Old Testament there was no Church of God, for the Church is a New Testament institution. As the Revelation is the book of consummation these three classes must be seen in the contents of this Book. Many expositors have seen nothing but the struggles of the Church in her history in this Book. This is true of the so-called Preterist school and also of the Historical school of interpretation. The Preterist school teaches a fulfillment of all the apocalyptic visions in the struggles of the Church in the past. The Historical school

*"Harmony of the Prophetic Word"—a volume which has been used under God's blessing to open the minds of many to the meaning of Prophecy.

also teaches that the visions concern mostly the Church. These schools of interpretation leave out the Jews and what is written concerning them and their final history during the end of the age, preceding the glorious appearing of our Lord. Of late another school of interpreters has come into existence. They teach that the entire Book of Revelation concerns the Jewish people and that there is nothing about the Church in this last Book of the Bible. Any interpretation of Revelation which ignores the Jews, the people Israel and the fulfillment of Old Testament predictions concerning them is wrong. And any interpretation which teaches that there is nothing about the Church in Revelation is equally wrong. The Church and her destiny on earth, the destiny of the true Church and the destiny of the apostate Church, or Christendom, is found in the Book. The Jews and what concerns them in the end of the age, the Gentiles, the nations of the earth, and the judgments in store for them, as well as the future of the earth, a future of glory and blessing: all this is recorded in our New Testament Book of Prophecy.

The True Interpretation

There is a true interpretation of Revelation which is in harmony with all previous prophecies and which opens the Book to our understanding. But how are we to find this true interpretation? We answer, the Book itself furnishes it. This is an important fact, both convincing and conclusive. It is therefore of no profit to examine the different theories and schools of interpretation. We shall avoid the terms Preterist, Historical and Futurist, and not try, as it has been attempted, to reconcile these different modes of interpretation. There must be one true interpretation, and we claim that this is given to us by the Lord Himself in this Book.

The Key Which Fits

It has often been truthfully said, every Book in the Bible contains a key which unlocks the Book. The Revelation is

no exception. John the beloved disciple was in banishment in the isle of Patmos, as Daniel the man greatly beloved, was a captive in Babylon. The Lord called these two great servants to behold the panorama of the future. Both wrote down their visions. While in the Book of Daniel we find no direct command to write, we find such a command in the first chapter of Revelation. John received divine instruction how to write the Revelation. We find this in the nineteenth verse, "Write therefore what thou hast seen, and the things that are, and the things that are about to be after these."* John, guided by the Holy Spirit then wrote the Revelation according to the divine direction. In examining this command to write we find that three things are mentioned. He is to write first the things he had seen, then the things which are, and finally the things that are about to be after these. When John received these instructions he had already seen something, and the vision he had he was instructed to write down. Then present things, the things which are, and future things, to be after present things have passed away, must be located in this book. So we have the past, the present and the future in this key verse.

Three Divisions—Where are They

It is then clear that the Book of Revelation must be divided into three main divisions. How are we to locate these divisions? They are marked, so that we are not left in doubt about it. In the beginning of the fourth chapter we find a significant statement which shows where the third division begins. After these things, that is after the contents of the opening three chapters were past, John heard the same voice speaking to him once more. He sees a door opened in heaven and is told, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee the things which must take place after these things" (iv:1). There can then be no doubt at all that with the fourth chapter the seer beheld the things which take place after the preceding things which are, have passed away. The third

*This is the correct translation of this important verse.

division of Revelation begins with the fourth chapter. John beholds future things from heaven into which he had been taken "in the Spirit." The things he had seen and the things which are, are therefore contained in the first three chapters of the Book.

The first chapter contains the things he had seen. "What thou seest write in a book" was the first instruction John received (verse 11). In the nineteenth verse he is told, "Write therefore what thou hast seen." Between verse 11 and verse 19 he saw a vision, which he was to write, and this vision constitutes the first section or division of the Book. The second and third chapters form the second division, the things which are. The beginning of the fourth chapter to the end of the Book is the final, the third division. There is no better and more logical key. And this key given in the Book determines the true interpretation.

The Patmos Vision

"The thing thou hast seen"—the first section of Revelation is the great Patmos vision, chapter i:12-18. It is the vision of the glorified Son of Man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (or lampstands).

The Things Which Are

The things which are, the present things, begin the prophetic section of the Revelation. The second and third chapters of Revelation, the things which are, contain the messages of our Lord addressed to the seven churches of Asia Minor. These messages contain the first great Prophecy of Revelation. The prophecy concerns the Church on earth. We shall show in our comment on these two chapters that we have in them a divine history of the Church on earth. It is one of the most remarkable sections of the Prophetic Word. What this present age is to be religiously and how it will end is made known in other parts of the

New Testament. Our Lord in some of His Kingdom parables (Matthew xiii) reveals the characteristics of this age. The parables of the sower, the evil seed sown into the field, the mustard seed parable and the parable of the leaven are prophetic and teach, in part at least, what the church messages reveal. The Holy Spirit in the Epistolar testimony also reveals the religious and moral characteristics of the age, and depicts its departure from the truth, and its end. The destiny of the true Church is heavenly. She has a "blessed hope," which is to be with the Lord in Glory. She is the Body of Christ, and He is the "Head of the Body." The Church is also the Bride of Christ and He is the Bridegroom. The Body is united to the Head in Glory; the Bride will be joined to the Bridegroom. 1 Thessalonians iv:13-18 is the Scripture which reveals this end for the true Church on earth. The professing Church, Christendom, which rejects the doctrine of Christ and goes into apostasy has a far different destiny. The Lord will disown that which has denied His Name, and judgment and wrath is to be poured out upon apostate Christendom (2 Thess. i:7-9). These predictions concerning the Church on earth are contained in the seven Church messages. When we come to the close of the third chapter we find a significant promise, and equally significant threat. "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation (trial) which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth" (iii:10). This is the promise. It tells of the removal of the true Church, composed of all true believers, from this earthly scene. "I will spue thee out of my mouth" (iii:6). This is the threat to the apostate Church. Both the promise and the threat will be fulfilled. After the third chapter the word church does not occur again in Revelation. The reason for this is obvious. The history of the Church on earth terminates with the close of the third chapter. Because the true Church is no longer here but has been taken up into Glory, and that which professes to be the Church is disowned by the Lord, therefore no more mention of the Church is made in Revelation.

The Things Which Are After These

The future things, things after the removal of the true Church from the earth, occupy the greater part of this Book. It is of the greatest importance to see that nothing whatever after the third chapter of Revelation has yet taken place. Some speak of a past and partial fulfillment of some of the visions found in this section. In view of the scope of the Book this is impossible. The open door in heaven, the voice which calls the Seer to pass through that open door into heaven, is symbolical of the great coming event, the realization of the blessed Hope of the coming of the Lord for His Saints. That this open door is mentioned immediately after the third chapter and John is suddenly in the spirit in the presence of the throne in heaven is very significant. It proves that the entire situation is now changed. And the first great vision is a vision of the Saints in Glory occupying thrones and worshipping God and the Lamb. With the sixth chapter the great judgment visions of this Book begin. These great punitive dealings with the earth are executed from above. All transpires after the Lord has taken His Saints into Glory. No seal can be broken as long as this event has not been. But after the Rapture, the Seals of the Book, which the Lamb received, are broken by Him, the trumpet and the vial judgments fall upon the earth. All this takes place after the home-going of the true Church and before the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (xix:11, etc.).

Now this portion of Revelation from chapter vi to xix contains the events which transpire during the end of the age. It is the unfulfilled seventieth week of the great prophecy in the Book of Daniel (Dan. ix:24-27). This "end of the age" will last twice 1260 days, that is seven years. It is absolutely necessary to understand the scope of the seventy-week prophecy in Daniel in order to understand the greater part of these chapters in the Revelation.* We are led back

*"The Prophetic Daniel," by A. C. G. contains a very simple exegesis of Daniel's prophecies.

upon Jewish ground. Events in connection with the Jewish people and Jerusalem are before us. The times of the Gentiles have taken on their final form of ten kingdoms which Daniel saw on the fourth beast as ten horns, and Nebuchadnezzar on the image as ten toes. The empire in which these ten Kingdoms come into existence is the Roman empire. It will have a revival and come into existence again. Then a wicked leader will take the headship of that resurrected Roman empire, and another Beast, the false prophet, the Antichrist will domineer over the Jewish people and persecute their saints, the remnant of Israel, while the earth and the dwellers upon the earth experience the great judgments. The last half of these seven years is called the great tribulation. We must also remember that our Lord left behind a great Prophecy concerning the end of the age. This Prophecy is contained in the Olivet Discourse, the first part of which (Matt. xxiv:4-44) harmonizes in a striking manner with the events in Revelation vi-xix. Our Lord calls special attention to Daniel and likewise speaks of the great tribulation. In our brief annotations we shall point out some of the interesting and convincing details.

The glorious climax is the visible manifestation of the Lord out of heaven, crowned with many crowns,* the defeat and overthrow of the Beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, the binding of Satan, and the reign of Christ with His saints for a thousand years. After that follows the great white throne judgment, which is the judgment of the wicked dead, the glories of the new Jerusalem, the eternal destiny of the redeemed and the eternal destiny of the lost.

If this last great Book of the Bible is studied in this divinely given order it will no longer be, as is so often said, a sealed book. All fanciful interpretations and applications of these great visions to past or present history can no longer be maintained as soon as we reckon with the fact that these

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*Compare Revelation xix:11-21 with Daniel vii:11-14 and Matthew xxiv:27-31.

visions are not yet fulfilled, and are going to be fulfilled after the true Church is no longer on the earth.

The Promised Blessing

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this Prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand" (verse 3). A blessing is promised to him who readeth, and who hears and keeps. It does not say that a blessing is for him who understands and knows everything which is in this Book. If such were the condition the writer and the reader would have no claim on this promised blessing. The Bible-teacher, or any other man, who says he knows and understands everything found in this great finale of God's Word is very much mistaken. We cannot be sure about everything in some of these visions and the full meaning of some may not be understood till the world sees the fulfillment. The blessing is promised to all His people who give attention to the Revelation of Jesus Christ. What is the blessing we may expect through the reading and prayerful study of the words of this Prophecy?

First of all we receive through this Book a wonderful vision of our Saviour and Lord. This is what we need as His people above everything else, and it is this which brings blessing into our lives. As stated before, this Book is pre-eminently His revelation, a blessed unveiling of His person and Glory. But we also get another blessing. In reading through this Book we see what is in store for this age, what judgments will overtake the world, and how Satan's power will be manifested to the full upon those who rejected His grace. Judgment, tribulation and wrath are swiftly coming upon this age. Out of all this our gracious Lord has delivered us. There is no judgment, no wrath for us who know Him as our sin-bearer and our hiding-place. Praise must fill our hearts when we read the words of this Prophecy and remember the grace which has saved us from all which is coming upon this age. Another blessing is the assurance of ultimate

victory and glory. Dark is the age, and becoming darker, but in Revelation we behold the glory which is coming for His Saints first of all and after the judgment clouds are gone, for Jerusalem, the nations and the earth. Reading Revelation fills the heart with the assurance and certainty of the outcome of all. It is a solemn atmosphere which fills the whole Book of Revelation. As we continue to read and continue to breathe this heavenly and solemn atmosphere it will result in a closer walk with God, a more spiritual worship and a greater and more unselfish service for Him "Who loveth us and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us priests and kings unto God His Father."

The Divisions of the Revelation

Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ

I. THE PATMOS VISION OF THE GLORIFIED SON OF MAN. Chapter i.

CHAPTER I.

1. The Introduction. Verses 1-3.
2. Greeting and Benediction. Verses 4-5.
3. The Praise. Verses 6-7.
4. The Testimony of the Almighty. Verse 8.
5. John in Patmos. Verses 9-11.
6. The Great Vision of Christ in Glory. Verses 12-16.
7. The Commission. Verses 17-21.

II. THE THINGS WHICH ARE. THE SEVEN CHURCH MESSAGES REVEALING THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH ON EARTH. Chapters ii-iii.

CHAPTER II.

1. Ephesus, the Post-Apostolic Period. Verses 1-7.
2. Smyrna, the Period of Persecution. Verses 8-11.
3. Pergamos, the Period of Corruption. Verses 12-17.
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Analysis and Annotations

I. THE PATMOS VISION OF THE GLORIFIED SON OF MAN.

CHAPTER I.

1. The Introduction. 1-3.
2. Greeting and Benediction. 4-5.
3. The Praise. 6-7.
4. The Testimony of the Almighty. 8.
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6. The Vision of Christ in Glory. 12-16.
7. The Commission. 17-21.

1. The Introduction: Verses 1-3. The book does not contain "revelations" but it is one great revelation, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The third verse is of much importance. It pronounces a blessing upon all who read and hear the words of this prophecy and who keep the things that are written therein. Here, as already stated, we read that the Revelation is a great prophecy.

2. Greeting and Benediction: Verses 4-5. The churches addressed were in the Province of Asia. (See Acts xvi:6; xix:10.) The words of greeting "Grace and peace unto you" tell of the two great possessions of the church. Though the professing church may fail in her testimony, grace and peace, even in the dark days of apostasy, will never fail. In the greeting here Jehovah-God, the great "I am"—Who is, Who was and Who is to come—stands first. Then follows the Holy Spirit in His own completeness and His diverse activities, spoken of as "the seven Spirits." And finally the name of our Lord. "He is the faithful witness," who lived as such in holiness and perfect obedience on earth. "The First-Begotten from the dead"; He died that shameful death on the Cross and God raised Him from the dead. "The Prince of the kings of the earth." This is His future title and glory.

3. The Praise: Verses 6-7. This is the true Glory-song.

It contains the blessed Gospel of Grace. What He has done for us; what He has made us; and what we shall be with Him. It is the first doxology in this Book. See the swelling praise and worship two-fold, three-fold, four-fold and seven-fold in Chapters iv:11; v:13; vii:12. And then for the first time in this Book His personal, visible and glorious coming is announced.

4. The Testimony of the Almighty: Verse 8. God, so to speak, puts His seal upon it. The words of the preceding verse "Even so, Amen" must be read with this verse. The speaker is Jehovah, the Almighty.

5. John in Patmos: Verses 9-11. John was in banishment in the Isle of Patmos. Patmos is a small rocky isle, and about ten miles long and six wide. According to ancient tradition this island was used as a place of exile for offenders who belonged to the better classes. John was exiled on account of his faithful witness to the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus. He came to be in the Spirit on the Lord's day. Does this mean "the day of the Lord," that is, the day of His visible manifestation, or does it mean He was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, the first day of the week? Dr. Bullinger teaches that the Lord's day means "the Day of the Lord" (Isa. ii:12), and says: "John was not in a state of spiritual exaltation on any particular Sunday at Patmos, as the result of which he saw visions and dreamed dreams. But as we are told he found himself by the Spirit in the day of the Lord." But this view is not correct. It is not the prophetic day of the Lord, but the Lord's day, the day which the early church from the beginning celebrated as the day of His resurrection. In Corinthians we read of "the Lord's supper" in the same way as "the Lord's day" is used here. Nor could John have been projected to the day of the Lord when his first message given to him by the glorified Christ concerned the church and her history on earth.

6. The Vision of Christ in Glory: Verses 12-16. A voice had spoken, as of a trumpet telling him to write in a book what he was about to see and to send the message to the seven churches. And as he turned he beheld the greatest

vision human eyes has ever seen. He saw seven golden candlesticks (lampstands); these represent the seven churches (verse 20) and are symbolical of the whole church. "In the midst", John saw one "like unto a Son of Man." But He is more than Man, He is the Ancient of Days as well as Son of Man, the Alpha and the Omega, in His humiliation and in His exaltation. He was the Son of Man on earth; He is Son of Man in Glory. When He comes back to earth and receives the Kingdom, He will receive it as Son of Man to judge the earth in righteousness. Here we behold Him in His judicial character. The robe down to His feet expresses His dignity as the King-Priest, who is about to enter upon His future work. The golden girdle is symbolical of His divine righteousness. His white head and hair identify Him with the Person whom Daniel saw sitting in judgment (Dan. vii:9-12). The flaming eyes, the fiery burning feet, the voice like the sound of many waters, the two-edged sword, all are symbolical of His glory and character.

There is one feature of the vision which needs an explanation. What do the seven stars mean, which are in the right hand of the Son of Man? Verse 20 gives the answer. They are the seven angels of the seven churches. Angels and stars are symbolical figures. The application of these terms to church-officers or bishops and pastors is incorrect. Stars are used in scripture to typify true believers. Stars are heavenly bodies which shine during the night; so are true believers in a heavenly position with the responsibility to shine in the night. The lampstands represent the visible, professing church; the stars represent the true believing element in the Church. They are in the right hand of Himself, held securely there. Furthermore, only true believers have an ear to hear what the Spirit saith. The stars are called angels, because an angel is a messenger and true believers are likewise that.

7. The Commission: Verses 17-20. John fell at His feet as dead. Compare with Daniel x:4-11. The vision was overpowering. But graciously His hand rests upon His prostrated disciple, the same who once leaned upon His

bosom, and he hears the blessed words His people know and love so well, "Fear not!" Once more He bears witness as to Himself. He is "He that liveth," the Jehovah, the Self-existing One; He was dead; He died the sinner's death and won the victory. He is alive forevermore, as the risen One He has the key of Hades and of Death. Then follows the Commission which the reader finds fully explained in the Preface and Key to Revelation.

II. THE THINGS WHICH ARE. THE SEVEN CHURCH MESSAGES AND THEIR PROPHETIC MEANING

CHAPTER II.

1. Ephesus. The Post Apostolic Period. 1-7.
2. Smyrna. The Period of Persecution. 8-11.
3. Pergamos. The Corruption Period. 12-17.
4. Thyatira. The Romish Corruption. 18-29.

The two chapters which follow the introductory chapter contain seven messages to seven local churches which were in existence in the province of Asia in the days when the Apostle John was prisoner in the Isle of Patmos. The view held by the late Dr. Bullinger and a few of his followers that these churches are yet to come into existence in connection with believing Jews during the great tribulation with which the age closes, must be rejected as extremely fanciful. The omniscient Lord on the throne detected in each of these local assemblies certain traits which at different periods of His church on earth would become the leading features. We have therefore, in these seven messages the history of the entire church in embryo. This assertion is fully confirmed by a closer study of these messages.

1. Ephesus. The Post-Apostolic Period: Verses 1-7. Ephesus was the church characterized by the greatest purity in doctrine and in walk. To the Ephesians, as "the faithful brethren in Christ," was addressed the most wonderful revelation God has given to man. It stands therefore for the model church in the apostolic age. But when Paul said farewell to the elders he predicted not smooth things, but the

incoming failure (Acts xx). Ephesus means "desired" and that corresponds with her original holy character. He reveals Himself afresh as being in the midst and holding His own in His blessed pierced hands, so true of believers at all times. The descriptions of Ephesus suit the apostolic church, and immediately after the apostles had passed away, except John. But He finds fault with it. His omniscient eyes look to the heart and there He finds declension. "I have against thee that thou leavest thy first love." He, the one altogether lovely was no longer the all absorbing object before their hearts. Paul manifests the full meaning of first love. His constant cry was: "Not I but Christ"—"That I may know him;" for him to live was Christ. Declension began in the church not with less service, less suffering or anything else, but with a decreasing heart-devotion to the Person of our Lord. That is where all backsliding begins. He calls to repentance, a return to Himself. The Nicolaitanes, whose works the church then hated, are mentioned again in the third message, where we shall define the word and the teaching of the Nicolaitanes. A promise to the overcomer follows.

2. Smyrna. The Period of Persecution: Verses 8-11. Smyrna means "bitterness" and is a form of myrrh which was largely used for the embalming of the dead. When the wise men brought myrrh to the child, the new-born king of the Jews, the meaning of it was that the King would have to die. Smyrna was a suffering church, many of its members had to seal their faith by dying the martyr's death. Corresponding with this characteristic, the Lord speaks of Himself as "The First and the Last, who was dead and is alive." That is His comfort for the church passing through the horrors of persecution and intense sufferings. In connection with this message to Smyrna the synagogue of Satan is mentioned. It means the Judaistic faction of the church, who, while they claimed to be Christians, also claimed to be Jews, observing the law, the Sabbath day and other parts of the legal system of Judaism. This synagogue of Satan helped in the afflictions of Smyrna. Nor is the same "syn-

agogue of Satan" missing today in the professing sphere of Christendom.

He announces that the devil would cast some of them into prison, that they should have tribulation for ten days, and that it would require faithfulness unto death to gain the crown of life. The Apostolic age was followed by the martyr age, which lasted up to the beginning of the Fourth Century. Pagan emperors under the inspiration of Satan, the roaring lion, persecuted the church. No one knows how many hundreds of thousands died the martyr's death, flayed and burned alive, cast before wild animals and cruelly tortured; thus they were faithful unto death and gained the crown of life. It is also significant that the address to Smyrna contains the number ten; church history records ten great persecutions.

3. Pergamos. The Corruption Period: Verses 12-17. After the devil had played the roaring lion for several centuries, trying to exterminate the church of Jesus Christ, he discovered that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." He then stopped the persecutions suddenly and began to corrupt the church. This is the meaning of the message to Pergamos, which means "twice married," a typical name for the professing church which claims to be the bride of Christ, but is married to the world. Pergamos is dwelling where Satan has his throne. Milton described Satan being in hell.

> "High on a throne of royal state,
> That far outshone the wealth or Ormuz or of Ind,
> Satan exalted sat."

But that is not Scripture. Satan will be in hell, in his final abode "the lake of fire," but he is not there now. He is the god of this world (age); his throne is right here on earth. And Pergamos had been married to the world. This is also indicated by the mention of Balaam, who cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, by inducing them to take the daughters of the heathen and thus give up their God demanded separation. The church then gave

up her pilgrim character, settled down in the world, became a world institution, as revealed by our Lord in the parable of the mustard seed. What happened in the beginning of the Fourth Century church-historians have proclaimed as the "triumph of Christianity." It was rather "the defeat of Christianity," for that happened which corrupted the church of Christ.

The instrument of the devil used to bring about this was the Emperor Constantine. He had a rival by name of Maxentius, whom he faced in battle. Constantine claimed that the night before he had a vision of Christ bearing a cross with the words: "*In hoc signo vinces* (In this sign thou shalt conquer). He had the next morning a beautiful banner made, which was called *the Labarum*, and went forth to battle, in which Maxentius was defeated as well as another competitor by name of Licinus. Constantine then became emperor and nominally a Christian and head of the church, while retaining his heathen title as *Pontifex Maximus*, the high-priest. Then the corruption of the church resulted. The church became a political world institution, like the mustard seed, rooting itself in the field (the world) became a great tree, opening its branches to the fowls of the air to defile (Matt. xiii; see annotations there). Heathen priests became Christian priests. Heathen temples were changed into Christian churches; he demanded all children to be "christened," that is, made Christians by putting water upon their heads; heathen days of feasting and drinking were made into Christian days, like our "Christmas" and nearly all the other saints' days.

Here again the Nicolaitanes are mentioned, but, while the Ephesians hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, here in Pergamos we find the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, and the Lord says: "which thing I hate." What is it, then? Some say that there was a certain Bishop Nicol who taught bad doctrines and his followers were called "the Nicolaitanes." But this Bishop Nicol is a fictitious person; he cannot be historically located.

Nicolaitanes is Greek; it is a compound. *Nikao* is a verb

and means to have the upper hand, to domineer; *laos* means the people (our English "laity"). Nicolaitanes signifies "the domineerers of the people." A priestly class had sprung up in the church, domineering over the rest of the people, the so-called laity. And this domineering class claimed a superior place in the body of Christ and a priesthood which rightly belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ. This evil was rejected in Ephesus, but is fully sanctioned and tolerated in Pergamos. Priestly assumption became then, and ever since has been, the corruption of Christianity. This is what our Lord hates and what He hates we must hate with Him.

4. Thyatira, the Period of the Romish Corruption: Verses 18-29. The corruption which set in like a great flood with the fourth century increased till the depths of Satan (verse 24) were reached. Thyatira brings us into the period of the Papacy and its wickedness, ecclesiastical and otherwise. Here our Lord reveals Himself as "the Son of God." Rome speaks more of Him as the son of the virgin, the son of Mary, than as the Son of God. The Roman Catholic apostasy has put a woman in the place of the Son of God. Her corruption is fully revealed in verse 20. Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, was permitted to teach and seduce God's servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. Jezebel the wicked woman represents the Papacy. Jezebel was a heathenish woman married to an Israelitish King. She was a queen and an idolatress and persecuted the true prophets of God (1 Kings xviii-xxi). Apply all this to the Romish church with her spiritual fornication and idolatry. The church, or, rather, the papacy, assumes the place of teacher and dictator and Christ is rejected. The name Jezebel has a twofold meaning. It means "a chaste one"; the other name is "dunghill." Rome claims to be the Bride of Christ; in reality she is a harlot, and called so in chapter xvii, and therefore a dunghill of all vileness and corruption. In verse 21 we find another important hint. It is said, "she repents not." Rome does not change. She is the same today in every respect as she was 500 years ago. She will continue in her perverted state of

impenitence till her predicted doom will overtake her (compare verse 22 with chapter xvii.) She is the woman of which our Lord spoke in the fourth kingdom parable in Matthew xiii (see annotations there) which took leaven (corruption) and put it into the three measures of meal (symbolical of the doctrine of Christ). It is noteworthy that beginning with the message to Thyatira the Lord announces His coming, that is, His second visible coming. Every following message speaks of it. This shows that the three preceding church periods and conditions are passed and the conditions pictured in Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea will continue till He comes. The Apostolic age cannot be brought back; nor will there be again a persecution by Roman emperors; nor will the church again become corrupted as in Pergamos. The Romish conditions continue to the end of the age.

CHAPTER III.

1. Sardis. The Reformation Period. 1-6.
2. Philadelphia. The Faithful Remnant. 7-13.
3. Laodicea. The Indifferent and Apostate Church. 14-22.

1. Sardis. The Period of the Reformation: Verses 1-6. We have traced briefly the decline during the 1450-1500 years of Church history. The climax is reached in Thyatira, prophetically the Roman abomination and apostasy. In Sardis we see the progress of evil stayed. Roman Catholicism, as already mentioned, is a fixed and unchanging religious system. Rome will yet have for a brief season a startling revival and get back her place as the mistress of the nations. But in Sardis we see a reaction. Sardis means "those escaping." It is the reformation period, the movement which produced Protestantism. The reformation itself was of God and the great men who were used were the most mighty instruments of the Holy Spirit. It was the greatest work, up to that time, since the days of the apostles. But out of it came the human systems which go by the name of Protestantism. The reformation began well, but soon developed in the different Protestant systems into a dead, lifeless thing.

They have a name to live but are dead. This is the verdict of our Lord upon the churches which sprung out of the reformation: "Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead."

2. Philadelphia. The Faithful Remnant: Verses 7-13. Philadelphia means "brotherly love." As Sardis came out of Thyatira, a protest against it, so Philadelphia comes out of Sardis and is a protest against the dead, lifeless, Spiritless condition prevailing in Protestantism. Out of the deadness of the state churches over and over again came forth companies of believers, energized by the Holy Spirit. Philadelphia has been variously applied to early Methodism,the evangelical movements, missionary efforts and to the revivals of the nineteenth century. But it is more than that. It is a complete return to the first principles. The message makes this clear. It is the one message (besides Smyrna) in which the Lord does not say "I have against thee," it is that which pleases Him and which He commends. It is a revival and turning back to the first love. The Lord Jesus Christ is once more as the all absorbing object before the heart; Philadelphia repudiates all that dishonors Him and owns alone that worthy, ineffable Name. It is a faithful remnant gathering around His Name as there was a faithful remnant in the closing days of the Old Testament (Mal. iii:16-17). All human pretensions are rejected. The truth of the unity of all believers is owned and manifested in brotherly love towards all the Saints. They walk in the path of separation, in self-judgment, in lowliness of mind; they have a little strength, which means weakness; they are a feeble few. Twice the Lord speaks of obedience to His Word. "Thou hast kept my Word"—"Thou hast kept the Word of my patience." And the Philadelphian does not deny His Name. These are the two chief characteristics of this phase of Christianity during the closing days of the professing Church on earth: Obedience to His Word and faithfulness and devotion to His Name. The Word and the Name are denied in the last days. The apostasy of Christendom consists in the rejection of the written Word and the living

Word. And turning their backs upon a dead profession, going on in confessed weakness are such paralyzed in their service? Far from it! The Lord promises to open the door for service which no man can shut. Every child of God may test this. True and continued service is the result of true and continued faithfulness to the Lord. Especially is this service to be blessed to those who hold to a perverted Judaism (verse 9). And there is the great promise, which they believe and hope for, the coming of Himself to keep them out of the great tribulation (verse 10). In Philadelphia there is a revival of prophetic truth, an earnest waiting for the coming of the Lord. Philadelphia is not a defined church-period, but rather a description of a loyal remnant called out by the Spirit of God and bearing the final testimony to the whole counsel of God by word and deed. If the reader desires to please the Lord, then study the details of the message to Philadelphia and walk accordingly.

3. Laodicea. The Indifferent and Apostate Church: Verses 14-22. Loadicea means "The judging or rights of the People." It is opposite of Nicolaitanism. The domineerers of the people still go on in Rome, but in Protestantism the people (the laity) arise and claim their rights and do the judging. This condition was also foreseen by the Apostle Paul. "For the time will come when they (the laity) will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Tim. iv:3). We see in Laodicea the final religious and apostate conditons of protestant Christendom and the complete rejection of the professing body. "I will spue thee out of my mouth." He Himself is seen standing outside, which shows that He is rejected. But infinite Grace! He knocks and is still willing to come in and bestow the riches of His Grace. And the Philadelphian-Christian, who is separated from the Laodicean state, whose heart is filled with the Love of Christ can learn a lesson here. If our Lord stands outside and yet knocks and waits in patience, we too with Him outside of the camp where He is disowned, can

try to gain admittance to Laodicean hearts. Epaphras did this (Col. iv:12-13). Laodicea consists in a proudly boasting spirit with total indifference to the Lord Jesus Christ and to His Name. It is religiousness without any truth nor the power of the Holy Spirit. Lukewarmness expresses it all. "Lukewarmness, a perfect jumble of sacred and worldly matters. The word does not point chiefly to half-heartedness. But as lukewarmness is produced by pouring of hot and cold water together into the same vessel, so in the Laodicean state, intense worldliness will be varnished over by plausible and humanitarian and religious pretences." Great reformation movements for the advancement of religion and the betterment of the world, the rejection of the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation, are characteristic features of this final phase of Christendom. It will continue and wax worse and worse till His patience is exhausted. Then the true church will be caught up with the departed Saints to meet Him in the air, and Laodicea will be spued out of His mouth. It is important to notice that Thyatira (Rome), Sardis (Protestantism) and the two phases of Protestantism represented by Philadelphia and Laodicea co-exist. They go on together. This is seen by the fact that in each our Lord speaks of His second coming (ii:25; iii:3; iv:10-11, 16). The Lord takes His own to Himself. Rome and an apostate Protestant Christendom continue on earth during the period of judgment, preceding the visible coming of the Lord.

III. THE THINGS WHICH ARE AFTER THESE. THE END OF THE AGE. THE CONSUMMATION AND FINAL MESSAGES

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1. THE HEAVENLY SCENE
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1. The Open Door and the Vision of the Throne. 1-3.
2. The Twenty-four Elders. The Throne. 4-5.
3. The Four Living Creatures and the Worship. 6-11.
4. Who is Worthy to Open the Book? v:1-3.
5. The Answer. 4-5.
6. The Vision of the Lamb. 6-7.
7. Worship and Praise. 8-10.

1. The Open Door and the Vision of the Throne: Verses 1-3. The scene changes suddenly. We are no longer on earth but are transported into heaven. The true church is gone and the apostate Church, while still on earth to pass into the judgments of the great tribulation, is no longer owned by the Lord and, therefore, not mentioned. That is why the word "church" disappears entirely from the book after the third chapter. The open door and the voice which calls "come up hither" and John's presence in glory in the spirit, clearly indicate symbolically the fulfilment of 1 Thess. iv:15-17. That for which the faithful remnant waited, the blessed hope of the Church, has suddenly come to pass. The departure of the true Church from the earth will be as sudden as its beginning (Acts ii:1-2).

John's first vision in heaven is the established throne, the sign and symbol of the universal government of God. While thrones on earth begin to totter and to fall and man's day closes in the predicted upheavals, there is a throne which cannot be affected nor disturbed. Yea, He who sitteth there and looks down upon earth and sees man's rebellion and madness laughs at them and holds them in derision (Psalm ii:4). The occupant of the throne was to look upon like a Jasper (rather the diamond) and a sardine stone. Our Lord and the glory of His Person are symbolically represented in these stones. His glory in the brilliant stone, His redemption work in the blood-red Sardine. The rainbow in emerald-green tells us that in the judgments about to come upon the earth mercy will be also remembered. It is the covenant sign. Though judgments come, yet mercy is in store for Israel and the earth.

2. The Twenty-four Elders. The Throne: Verses 4-5. Who is represented by these twenty-four elders? They cannot be angels. Angels are never seen seated upon thrones (not seats, as in the authorized version), nor are they crowned, nor can they sing redemption's song as the Elders do. There is only one possible meaning. They represent the redeemed, the saints in glory. They are Priests (clothed in white) and they are Kings (crowned); they are the royal priest-

hood in the presence of the throne. And why twenty-four? It points us back to the work David did for the temple. He appointed twenty-four courses of the priests (1 Chron. xxiv). Twice twelve would suggest the saints of the Old and New Testaments.

There were lightnings and voices and thunderings. This is repeatedly stated. See viii:5, xi:18, xvi:18. It is the symbol of God's throne in its judicial aspect.

3. The Four Living Creatures and Worship: Verses 6-11. The sea of glass is a reminder of the great laver in Solomon's temple in which the priests had to wash. Now it is solidified because no more water is needed for the cleansing of the saints. The word "beast" should be changed to "living creatures" or "living ones." They are not symbolical of the church, or a special class of saints, but they are the same supernatural beings seen in the Old Testament and always in connection with the throne and the presence of Jehovah. They are the cherubim of Ezekiel's great vision, chapters i and x. Their constant cry, "Holy, Holy," reminds us of the seraphim also (Isa. vi). The worship here is the worship of Him who is the Creator.

4. Who Is Worthy to Open the Book: Chapter v:1-3. Much has been written about the meaning of the book written within and sealed with seven seals. What the book contains is no secret whatever. Beginning with the sixth chapter the seals are opened and after they are all broken the contents of the book are made known. The book contains the judgments for this earth preceding His coming in power and glory and the beginning of His reign. It is, therefore, the book of the righteous judgments of God, preceding the glorious manifestation of the King of kings.

5. The Answer: Verses 4-5. John receives the answer to the question the strong angel had proclaimed. One of the Elders told him, "Behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and the seven seals thereof." No further comment is needed; the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lion of Judah and the Root of David. "The King's wrath is as a roaring lion" (Prov

xix:12). He is now to be revealed in mighty power and strength to execute judgment. (See Gen. xlix:9.) And He is also the Root of David.

6. The Vision of the Lamb: Verses 6-7. And now He is seen who alone is worthy to open the book. He does not appear as a Lion in majesty, but He is seen by John as a Lamb standing, as having been slain. The Lamb slain is the Lion. His victory was gained by dying, and, therefore, He must have as the Lion the victory over all His enemies. Thrice the number seven is repeated revealing His perfection. Notice especially three descriptions. He is "in the midst." He is the center of God's government and of heaven itself, as He is for His people the center of all their thoughts and affections. He is seen "as a Lamb standing." Now He is seated at the right hand of God, but when the time comes when His enemies are about to be made His footstool, He will arise to act. He will arise and have mercy upon Zion (Psa. cii:12). And He is seen as "the Lamb slain." The Greek word here suggests "slain in sacrifice."

7. Worship and Praise: Verses 8-10. A great worship scene follows at once. The four living Creatures join in with the Elders, but the latter alone have harps and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. The harps express their great joy and praise and the bowls full of incense denote the priestly ministry of the redeemed. Such is part of our glorious future, an endless praise of deepest joy, and perfect ministry. The prayers of the saints are not the prayers of the past, but the prayers of Jewish saints, so beautifully rewritten in the Psalms, when the time of Jacob's trouble is on the earth. And then the new song! This is redemption's song, the song of redeeming love; the old song was the praise of God as the Creator in His glory (Job xxxviii:7). Redemption is now accomplished for the saints in glory; they look forward to the glorious manifestation with Himself and the great new song bursts forth. The praise of Him becomes universe-wide. The innumerable company of angels joins in it. "The number of them was

myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands."* And the praise described here leads us on to the time when God will be all in all. It is the never-ending praise, the Hallelujah-chorus of redeemed Creation! The four living creatures say "Amen"; the Elders worship. Omit "Him that liveth forever and ever," as these words do not belong here.

2. THE OPENING OF THE SEVEN SEALS CHAPTERS VI-VIII:5.

1. The First Seal. 1-2.
2. The Second Seal. 3-4.
3. The Third Seal. 5-6.
4. The Fourth Seal. 7-8.
5. The Fifth Seal. 9-11.
6. The Sixth Seal. 12-17.
7. **Parenthesis.** The Remnant of Israel. vii:1-8.
8. The Saved Multitude. 9-17.
9. The Seventh Seal. viii:1-5.

1. The First Seal: Verses 1-2. The Lamb, invested with all the authority to execute judgment, having received His commission from God, begins now to open the seals of the book which is in His hands, the hands which were once nailed to the cross. It is evident that the breaking of the seals does not begin till His Saints are gathered around the throne in glory. Until then it is still the day of grace. When the first seal is opened one of the living creatures said in voice of thunder, "Come." The words "and see" must be omitted here and in verses 3, 5 and 7. A rider upon a white horse appears; his is a bloodless conquest. He has a bow, but no arrow. He receives a crown and goes forth to conquer. Many expositors make this rider the Lord Jesus or some power which represents Him. It is positively incorrect. The rider here is a great counterfeit leader, not the personal Antichrist, but the little horn which Daniel saw coming out of the ten-horned beast (Dan. vii). This coming leader of the revived Roman empire will go forth to conquer and become its political head. He is Satan's man as we shall see later.

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*This is according to the Greek.

2. The Second Seal: Verses 3-4. The second seal reveals a rider upon a red horse. He takes away the false peace, which the rider upon the white horse as a divine judgment act established. The universal peace of which the world dreams without the presence of the Prince of Peace, will be of short duration. Another awful war follows. It will not be war alone between nation and nation, but it will be a world-wide reign of terror and bloodshed, a carnage unknown before in the history of the world. See in Matthew xxiv how our Lord mentions the great conflict of nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom.

3. The Third Seal: Verses 5-6. The black horse rider brings famine, exactly what our Lord mentions next in Matthew xxiv: "There shall be famines." Famine follows war and inasmuch as the second seal brings the greatest war, the third seal will bring the greatest famine. The judgments of God fall then on the earth. Our Lord also mentions famines.

4. The Fourth Seal: Verses 7-8. The next rider under the fourth seal is named death. And Hades, the region of the unseen (not hell), is populated. Sword, hunger, death, that is pestilences and the beasts of the earth, claim an awful harvest (Ezek. xiv:21). And so our Lord spoke of "pestilences." These four seal judgments are hardening judgments.

5. The Fifth Seal: Verses 9-11. The four living Creatures have uttered their four-fold "Come." They are thus seen in connection with the providential government of the world. Under the fifth seal the scene changes completely. John saw under the altar the souls of them that had been slain. And they cry, "How long, O Lord!" Who are they? Not the martyrs of past ages. They are risen from the dead and are in glory with redeemed bodies. The words of the Lord in the Olivet Discourse give us the key. Speaking to His Jewish disciples He said: "Then shall they deliver you up, and shall kill you and ye shall be hated of all nations for my Name's sake" (Matt. xxiv:9). The Lord speaks of another company of Jewish disciples who will bear a witness

during the end of the age, after the rapture of the Church. He will not leave Himself without a witness. He calls a remnant of His people Israel and they bear a witness to the coming of the Messiah, their coming deliverer and King. Many of them suffer martyrdom. Their cry, "How long?" is the well-known prayer of Jewish saints; and their prayer to have their blood avenged is equally a Jewish prayer. Christians are not supplicating for vengeance on their foes. The prayer for vengeance refers us to the imprecatory psalms prewritten by the Holy Spirit in anticipation of the final persecution of Jewish believers. And the fellow-servants and their brethren, who are yet to be killed (verse 11), are the martyrs of that remnant during the final three and one-half years, which is the great tribulation.

6. The Sixth Seal: Verses 12-17. Are the things mentioned under this seal to be taken in a literal sense or symbolically? Most of it is symbolical, yet at the same time great physical phenomena are also involved. The earthquake possibly means a literal earthquake. "Earthquakes in diverse places" our Lord predicted. And they increase as the age draws to its close. But the language is symbolical. Everything is being shaken in this poor world. The civil and governmental powers on earth all go to pieces; every class from kings to slaves is affected by it and terrorized. The political and ecclesiastical world is going to pieces. And when these shaking times have come, when thrones fall and anarchy reigns, when the great collapse of civilization and human society has come with signs on earth and in heaven, the earth-dwellers will see in anticipation the approaching day of wrath. Terror fills every breast and those who sneered at prayer, as the Christ-rejectors do now, will gather for a prayer-meeting to appeal to the rocks to cover them. Read the following Old Testament passages in connection with this seal: Isaiah xxiv, xxxiv:2-4; Joel ii:30-31; Zephaniah i; Haggai ii:6-7.

7. Parenthesis. The Remnant of Israel: Chapter vii:1-8. This is the first parenthesis. It must not be taken chronologi-

cally. The six-seal judgments extend over the entire period of the ending age. The rider upon the white horse will be on the scene to the end, wars will continue to the end, and culminate in the battle of Armageddon, and so do the famines and pestilences. And the sixth seal brings the end in view. We shall see the correspondence with the seventh trumpet and seventh vial later. The trumpet and vial judgments are more intense and more terrible than the seal judgments. In a certain sense they are parallel; the effect of each is continuously felt. The parenthetical vision of the seventh chapter also covers the entire period of the last seven years and brings before us even the vision of what will be after the great tribulation.

How much confusion would have been avoided if expositors and Christians in searching for the meaning of this vision, had not lost sight of two great facts: 1. This chapter can have no application to the Church on earth, nor to the Church in glory, for the simple reason that the Church is already complete and translated to glory. 2. The vision states clearly that the sealed company is "of all the tribes of the children of Israel."

The sealed company is of Israel. After the Church is removed to glory, when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in (Rom. xi:26) the Lord will turn in mercy to Israel and call, before the judgments fall, a remnant which will also be sealed (See Ezek. ix). This remnant is frequently seen on the pages of Old Testament prophecy. This sealed company also bears a great testimony. They are the preachers of the Gospel of the Kingdom, as a witness to all nations before the end comes (Matt. xxiv:14). Therefore, during the time when the judgments are executed from above there will be a world-wide preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom, proclaiming the coming of the King, calling to repentance and faith in His Name, and offering mercy still.

8. The Saved Multitude: Verses 9-17. The application of this passage of Scripture to the redeemed Church in glory is wrong. This Scripture does not apply to the Church in glory, but to saved Gentiles on earth. It is a company

which comes "out of the great tribulation." The church enters the glory before that great tribulation begins. The great multitude represents those Gentiles who will hear the final testimony and believe. They will have turned in repentance to Him and will be washed in His precious Blood. Our Lord speaks of them in the great judgment of the nations as sheep, who stand at His right hand and inherit the Kingdom (Matt. xxv:31, etc.). The brethren of our Lord mentioned in Matthew are the remnant of Israel. For a complete exposition see "The Gospel of Matthew," by the author of this volume. This great company, therefore, does not stand before a heavenly throne, but before the millennial throne on earth. It is a millennial scene after the tribulation is passed.

9. The Seventh Seal: Chapter viii:1-5. The silence in heaven when the seventh seal is opened is indicative of the solemn things which are now to come. The scroll is now fully opened and there is an ominous hush as the seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets of judgment. John beholds these seven angels, but before they begin to sound "another angel" is seen standing at the altar. This angel is not a creature, but like *the* angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament, is our Lord Himself. He is seen as the Priest in behalf of the praying, suffering saints on earth. No angel can offer the prayers of the saints, but He, who is the one Intercessor alone can do that. And for what do they pray on earth? For mercy for those who persecute the remnant of Israel? No! They pray for divine intervention, for the fire of judgment as Elijah did.

3. THE SOUNDING OF THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

CHAPTERS VIII:6-XI:18.

1. The First Trumpet. 6-7.
2. The Second Trumpet. 8-9.
3. The Third Trumpet. 10-11.
4. The Fourth Trumpet. 12-13.
5. The Fifth Trumpet. ix:1-12.
6. The Sixth Trumpet. 13-21.
7. **Parenthesis.** The Angel and the Little Book. x:1-11.

8. The Temple. xi:1-2.
9. The Two Witnesses. 3-12.
10. The Earthquake and the Seventh Trumpet. 13-18.

1. The First Trumpet: Chapter viii:6-7. The judgments which follow can hardly be fully interpreted at this time. It would be folly to dogmatize about them. The historical application we reject, because the scope of the book makes it clear that these judgments have not yet taken place. What many of these things mean may perhaps never be fully understood till they are actually in fulfillment. The first four trumpet judgments evidently stand by themselves. The fire the Lord cast down is doing its work. The first trumpet manifests the same evidences of divine wrath as came upon Egypt, when Israel suffered there, under the seventh plague (Exodus ix:23). Hail (heat withdrawn), fire and blood are all the symbols of divine wrath. The trees and the green grass were burned up. The green things are symbols of agricultural and commercial prosperity.

2. The Second Trumpet: Verses 8-9. That this is not a literal mountain is obvious. A mountain in Scripture language represents a Kingdom (Isaiah ii:2; Zech. iv:7; Psalm xlvi:2; and especially Jerem. li:25). The sea is typical of nations. Some kingdom, internally on fire, signifying probably revolution, will be precipitated into the restless sea of nations, and the result will be a still greater destruction of life and commerce, which is represented by the ships.

The Third Trumpet: Verses 10-11. In the preceding trumpet-judgments things were cast upon the earth, but here is a star which falls. It is some person who claimed authority and who becomes an apostate, whose fall produces the awful results given here. It may be the final Antichrist who first may have claimed to be for Israel a great teacher with divine authority and then takes the awful plunge. Worm-wood is his name and the waters became worm-wood and bitter.

4. The Fourth Trumpet: Verses 12-13. The sun, the moon and the stars are now affected. The sun is the symbol

of the highest authority; the moon, who has not her own light, is symbolical of derived authority; and the stars are symbolical of subordinate authority. The symbolical meaning of this trumpet judgment is that all authority within the revived Roman empire will be smitten by the hand of one above and as a result there will be the most awful moral darkness. These four-trumpet judgments tell of prosperity taken first from the earth; a great power burning with the fires of revolution affecting the nations; a great leader will fall and become worm-wood; and authority disowned and smitten will fill the territory of the Roman empire (Europe) with the densest darkness.

5. The Fifth Trumpet: Chapter ix:1-12. The remaining three trumpets have a "woe" attached to each. This is announced in the last verse of the preceding chapter, where the word angel should be "eagle." An eagle, the bird of prey, proclaims the three-fold woe. He acts thus as a herald of great judgments (Matt. xxiv: 28, Rev. xix:17-18). The fifth trumpet is a special judgment upon apostate Israel: because those who suffer are they "which have not the seal of God on their foreheads" (verse 4). The great tribulation in the second half of the week, comes now into prominence. If we turn to chapter xii:12 we read something similar to the eagle's message of woe. "Woe unto the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Preceding the sounding of the fifth trumpet the eagle proclaimed the woe upon the inhabiters of the earth. The star which is seen fallen from heaven with the key of the pit of the abyss is Satan himself cast out of heaven. The details of this event we learn in the twelfth chapter. He has the key to the pit of the abyss, the same word "deep," used in Luke viii:31. "And they (the demons) besought Him that He would not command them to go out into the deep (abyss)." He unlocks the prison house of the fallen angels and the most awful satanic agencies come forth to begin their "dread" work of torment. The smoke first, symbolical of darkening

the locusts next, symbolical of these demon powers. Awful darkness prevails and the most diabolical delusions, producing fearful torments among apostate Israel and the inhabiters of the earth. It is the time of the strong delusion (2 Thess. ii:4-11) which has come. And over them is a King. His name is given in Greek and Hebrew, showing that it is both Jew and Gentile that come under His power. Both names mean distinction.

6. The Sixth Trumpet: Verses 13-21. The sixth angel is commanded by a voice from the horns of the golden altar to loose the four angels who are bound at Euphrates, and as a result an innumerable company of horsemen is released.* They are prepared for a specific time to do their work. Euphrates is once more mentioned under the pouring out of the sixth vial. We believe the sixth vial judgment gives the key to these horsemen here. Euphrates does not mean the Turkish empire, as we shall more fully show when we come to the sixth vial. This river was both the boundary line of the old Roman empire and the land of Israel. Restraining influences held back the tide of nations on the other side of the river; this restraint is now removed and therefore a great invasion takes place. As the land of Israel is nearest it will suffer first, but the revived Roman empire will be the objective of these invading hordes. The "third part" stands for the Roman empire, the coming European confederacy. This invasion is under the King of the North. It is seen in its beginning here and is consummated under the sixth vial. There the "Kings of the Sunrise" are included. And under the sixth vial they are more specifically gathered for the great day of God Almighty.

7. Parenthesis. The Angel and the Little Book: Chapter x:1-11. The proclamation of the mighty angel is the first recorded event in this parenthesis. Who is this angel? It is Christ Himself. We saw our Lord in angel's form before the opening of the seventh seal and then He appeared

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*Greek: twice ten thousand times ten thousand, that is, 200 million. The number would indicate the immense, uncountable hordes.

in priestly dignity. Here before the sounding of the seventh trumpet he appears again in the same form, but He is called a mighty angel and we behold Him in royal dignity. The cloud, the rainbow, the face like the sun, His right foot upon the sea, the left on the earth, the voice like a lion and the seven thunders, all declare this to be correct. The hour is rapidly approaching when the kingdoms of this earth are to become His Kingdom. This is seen under the seventh trumpet. And, therefore, He is seen now in this attitude of royal dignity. The words which He speaks (verses 6 and 7) bear out this interpretation. "There shall be no longer delay." Man's day is about to close. The mystery of God is now to be finished, "as He hath declared to His servants, the prophets;" or in better rendering "the mystery of God also shall be completed according to the good tidings which He declared by His own servants, the prophets." How great has been that mystery! Evil had apparently triumphed; the heavens for so long had been silent. Satan had been permitted to be the god of this age, deceiving the nations. And Israel, too, is included in this mystery. And now the time has come when the mystery of God will be completed, when the glorious messages, the good tidings of the prophets concerning Israel's blessing and the kingdom, will be fulfilled.

But what is the little book which the angel holds in His right hand? It is not a sealed book, but open. It stands for the prophecies in the Old Testament relating especially to Israel during the time of the great tribulation, which is yet to come upon the earth, culminating in the personal and glorious appearing of the Lord to begin His millennial reign.

8. The Temple: Chapter xi:1-2. We see at once how Jewish things come now into view. To apply these verses to the Church and make the temple the Church is absolutely wrong. The temple and the altar are Jewish; the holy city is Jerusalem. After the Church has left the earth the Jewish people will be fully restored to their own land, and their land restored to them. They will possess Jerusalem once

more. When the Jews are once more masters in their own promised land they will erect another temple and then restore the Levitical worship as far as it is possible. Such a temple must be in Jerusalem (see Isaiah lxvi:1-4). In that temple the personal Antichrist, the beast out of the land of whom we shall read in chapter xiii, will appear and claim divine worship. (See Thess. ii:3-4.) Apostate Israel in corrupt alliance with equally apostate Gentiles is seen in the opening verses of this eleventh chapter, as the court without the temple. But in the midst of this corrupt mass, which will follow the delusion of the Antichrist and accept Satan's man as their Messiah, there will be the God-fearing remnant. This remnant is here divinely recognized as worshippers. Therefore that coming is called "the temple of God," because the Lord owns the true worshippers found in the midst of the unbelieving mass.

9. The Two Witnesses: Verses 3-12. Much has been written on these two witnesses who will appear in Jerusalem. It is clear they are still future and their work will be in that city. Some make them Enoch and Elijah and others think they will be Moses and Elijah returned in person. Some have claimed to be a re-incarnation of Elijah. Such claims are fanatical. No second coming of Moses is anywhere promised in the Word. Something, however, is said about the work of Elijah in the future (Mal. iv:5-6). But the words of our Lord in Matt. xi:14, speaking of John the Baptist, and Matt. xvii:12, seem to make it clear that no literal coming of the same Elijah, who went into glory, without dying, is meant. Yet the deeds of these two witnesses clearly link them with the work of Moses and Elijah. They each do both the things that Moses and Elijah did separately. We take it then that these two witnesses represent the great testimony to be given in Jerusalem during the 1,260 days of the great tribulation. Perhaps the leaders will be two great instruments, manifesting the spirit of Moses and Elijah, endowed with supernatural power, but a large number of witnesses is unquestionably in view here. They

maintain in the midst of the Satanic scenes a powerful testimony for God.

The period of the great tribulation was mentioned in verse 2. Here for the first time the beast is mentioned. This Beast coming out of the pit of the abyss, the deep, is the revived Roman empire under the little horn, seen by Daniel on the four-horned beast (Dan. vii:8). While he dominates over the Gentiles, he will turn in fury against these Jewish saints, and the two witnesses will be slain. He makes war with the godly remnant (Dan. vii:21). A part of that remnant will be killed. The vileness of these coming days of Satan's rule on earth is seen in the treatment of the bodies of Jehovah's servants. The wicked are so elated over the silencing of the testimony that they refuse to permit their burial so that they may feast their eyes upon the sickening spectacle. They rejoice and make it a festive occasion, because torment had come to their consciences through the testimony of the slain. Gentiles, who side with apostate Israel are mentioned, but especially a class which is called "they that dwell on the earth" rejoices over the end of the witnesses. The same class is mentioned several times. Study the passages where they are mentioned: Chapter iii:10, vi:9, 10; viii:13; xi:9, 10; xii:8; xiv:6, 7; xvii:8. They are the apostate, nominal Christians who are utterly blinded and hardened. Phil. iii:18-19 gives their character and destiny. They claim possession of the earth as belonging to them, but God is not only the God of heaven, He is also "the God of the earth" (Rev. xi:4). God's power is manifested in the physical resurrection and the visible translation of the two witnesses. Their enemies see a great miracle. The apostates who ridicule even now a physical resurrection, who sneer at the blessed Hope of a coming translation of the saints, will witness these two great facts. No wonder that a great fear fell upon them. The raised witnesses belong to the first resurrection (xx:4).

10. The Earthquake and the Seventh Trumpet: Verses 13-18. The terror becomes still greater when the whole city is shaken by a mighty earthquake. This is not a sym-

bolical earthquake but a convulsion of nature by which the fourth part of the city falls and 7,000 men are killed. It marks the end of the second woe. Then those who escaped the visitation gave glory unto the God of heaven. It is only inspired by fear. They do not turn in repentance unto God. Here ends the parenthetical vision.

The seventh trumpet brings us to the very end of the tribulation and to the beginning of the millennial reign. It is Jerusalem's deliverance. He who alone is worthy receives the Kingdom. How clear this ought to make the fact that our Lord has no earthly Kingdom now, but He receives the promised Kingdom on the earth at the end of these things. See Dan. vii:14. Heaven worships too; they celebrate the fact that He has taken His great power. It is a review of all that takes place and what follows when He appears out of heaven. The nations were full of wrath (Ps. ii; xlvi:6); His wrath is come; resurrection will follow; this points to the time after the kingdom (chapter xx:12). And His servants, the prophets and the saints, receive their reward, to reign with Him.

4. SATAN'S POWER AND MASTERPIECE.

CHAPTERS XI:19-XIII.

1. The Vision of the Opened Temple. xi:19.
2. The Woman With Child. xii:1-5.
3. The Escape of the Woman. 6.
4. War in Heaven. 7-12.
5. The Dragon Persecuting the Woman. 13-17.
6. The Beast out of the Sea. xiii:1-10.
7. The Beast out of the Earth. 11-18.

1. The Vision of the Opened Temple: Chapter xi:19. What follows now brings the great tribulation, the 1,260 days, into prominence. As we have seen the seventh trumpet takes us right to the end. But now we are led back.

Verse 19 of chapter xi belongs properly to the twelfth chapter. The Ark contains the covenant made with Israel. This is now to be remembered and connected with it are the manifestations of coming wrath for those who oppress His people.

2. The Woman with Child: Chapter xii:1-5. Who is represented by the Sun-clothed woman? Romanists have made out of her the Virgin Mary. Many expositors claim it is the Church which is represented by this woman. Some claim the woman is the professing Church and the man-child represents, according to their view, a class of overcomers who will escape the tribulation. This is a favored interpretation of some of the so-called "holiness people."

In the light of the scope of this book the woman cannot possibly have anything to do with the Church. Again, Christian Science has made the most absurd claim that this woman represents that instrument of Satan, the deluded woman, whom they worship as the founder of their cult. A hundred years ago another sect existed in England under the leadership of a woman, who also claimed to be the one of this vision. We do not need to seek long for the true meaning of the woman seen by John. She represents Israel. Everything in the symbolical statements bears this out, especially the crown with the twelve stars (Gen. xxxvii:9).

"Thus she is seen clothed with the glory of the sun—that is, of Christ Himself as He will presently appear in supreme power as Sun of Righteousness (Mal. iv:2); for the sun is the ruler of the day. As a consequence, her glory of old, before the day-dawn, the reflected light of her typical system, is like the moon under her feet. Upon her head the crown of twelve stars speaks naturally of her twelve tribes, planets now around the central sun."

It is Israel, what she is in the purposes of God. And the child, the nation brought forth, is the Messiah, Christ. Even so Paul writes of Israel "of whom as according to the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever" (Rom. ix:5). The identity of the child is established beyond controversy by the fact that the child is caught up unto God and His throne, destined to rule all nations with a rod of iron (Psa. ii:9; Rev. ii:28). The great red Dragon, the enemy of the woman and the child, is Satan. Seven crowns are symbolical of his authority as the god of this age and the ten horns symbolical of his power. These historical facts

are seen first through this vision. But this is done for the one purpose of bringing into view what is yet in store for Israel during the end time. Christ ascended upon high, took His place at the right hand of God, is waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. Then the present Christian age began. It is not recorded in this vision at all. He who came from Israel and who was rejected by His own, is nevertheless Israel's Messiah, the Hope of Israel. In Him and through Him alone the promises made to Israel can be fulfilled. The fulfillment of these promises is preceded by great sorrows and tribulation, the travail pains which come upon Israel during the great tribulation, before He, whom Israel once disowned, is revealed as Deliverer and King. And the red Dragon will do His most awful work during that period of tribulation, a work of hatred against the faithful seed of the woman.

3. The Escape of the Woman: Verse 6. The flight of the woman, Israel, has been taken by some to mean the dispersion of that nation during this age and Israel's miraculous preservation. But that is incorrect, It is true Israel has been miraculously preserved and Satan's hatred, too, has been against that nation. But here we have a special period mentioned, the 1,260 days, the last three and one-half years of Daniel's seventieth week. It means, therefore, that when the Dragon rises in all his furious power to exterminate the nation, God will preserve her. However, before we are told the details of that preservation and Satan's hatred, we read of the war in heaven. Satan is cast out of heaven, down upon the earth. Verses 15-17 and the entire chapter xiii will tell us what he will do on the earth.

4. War in Heaven: Verses 7-12. This great scene takes place before the great tribulation begins. Satan's place is not in hell at this time. As we saw in the message to Pergamos his throne is on earth, he is the god of this age. His dominion is in the air, he is the Prince of the power of the air (Eph. ii:2). Our present conflict as believers is "against principalities, against authorities, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the wicked spirits in the heavenlies"

(Eph. vi:12). Satan as the accuser of the brethren has access even into the presence of God. His accusations are ended. All the redeemed are gathered before the throne. All the malice and power of Satan could not frustrate the purpose of God. His grace and power have been victorious. Thus when the saints come into the heavenly possession Satan's dominion there is at an end. The purchased possession, the region above, will be redeemed by the power of God (Eph. i:13). Michael and his angels will begin their short and decisive war against Satan and his angels. Michael is the one archangel mentioned in Scripture. It is not the first time he met Satan face to face (Jude 9). And Daniel speaks of Michael, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which stadenth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Dan. xii:1). From this we learn that Michael will not only cause the expulsion of Satan out of heaven, but he will also stand up for the believing portion of Israel.

Satan is then cast out into the earth and his angels are cast out with him. It is identical with what we have seen already under the fifth trumpet, the star fallen out of heaven, opening the pit of the abyss with the darkening smoke and the locust swarms coming forth. Then there is joy in heaven because the accuser is cast down and his accusations are forever silenced. And the "woe" is pronounced upon those who dwell on the earth.

5. The Dragon Persecuting the Woman: Verses 13-17. He turns in fury against the woman which brought forth the man-child. Satan realizes now that his time is short. His expulsion from heaven will soon be followed by his arrest and imprisonment in the pit for a thousand years, and after that there is prepared for him his eternal home of misery, the lake of fire. As he knows that Israel is mostly concerned in the final drama, and the believing portion of that nation will inherit the kingdom, he turns in wrath against them.

Verse 6 should be connected with verse 14. It is symbolical language again we have here. The wilderness is a place of isolation, and the place prepared, speaks of God's care for them. But it is not the entire nation. The apostate part sides with Satan and with Satan's man, the Antichrist. But there is another part, which is preserved. This part is in the place of isolation among the nations. The water cast out by Satan is symbolical of the hatred which Satan stirs up against the people amongst the nations. But there will be other agencies in the earth by which this Satanic attempt to wipe from the face of the earth this faithful part of the nation will be frustrated.

6. The Beast Out of the Sea: Chapter xiii:1-10. This chapter brings now fully into view the Satanic powers operating during the great tribulation—the forty-two months. Satan's masterpieces are on the earth; energized by him and endued with his powers they work together to stamp out all that is left of the truth on earth. Their combined efforts are directed against the godly remnant of Jews and against those Gentiles who accepted the message of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

And John sees this first beast having ten horns with crowns and seven heads and these heads had names of blasphemy. Daniel had seen Babylonia, Med-Persia and Greco-Macedonia under the emblem of the lion, the bear and the leopard. John sees this beast here like a leopard, with bear's feet and lion's mouth. This revived Roman empire is an amalgamation of parts of the previous world empires. The preceding ones are absorbed by the last, the Roman empire. Therefore the revived Roman empire will contain the different elements in one great monster. This Roman empire will be revived in the first part of the final seven years. We saw this under the first seal. Here is the beginning of the period for which the Dragon gives to him his power, and his throne and great authority. It becomes now fully possessed by Satan. The ten horns are the ten kingdoms which will exist in that empire. We are told later that these ten kings "have one mind and shall give their

power and strength unto the beast" (xvii:13). In the same chapter the beast is also seen coming out of the abyss (xvii:8) denoting its Satanic origin. The heads represent the seven forms of government which have characterized the empire in the past, the seventh becomes the eighth. One of the heads is especially mentioned; later we read "he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition" (xvii:11). He was as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. This head denotes the imperial form of government, which had died, and now is revived in the person of the leader, the Prince of Daniel ix:27, the little horn, which Daniel saw in the midst of the ten horns. This will be Satan's man, one of his masterpieces. The whole earth will wonder after that beast and its Satan-possessed head.

7. The Beast Out of the Earth: Verses 11-18. The second Beast is not an empire with a great leader, but a person. The first Beast is out of the sea; the second out of the earth (land). The first has ten horns; the second has two. The Beast out of the sea comes first; the other Beast follows him. The first Beast is a political power; the second is a religious leader. The first is a Gentile power and its head a Gentile; the second is a Jew. The first Beast has Satanic power; so has the second Beast. The second Beast induced the worship of the first Beast whose dominion is over the entire Roman world and after whom the whole earth wonders; the sphere of the second Beast is Palestine. The first Beast through its head makes in the beginning of the seven years a covenant with many of the Jews, but in the middle of the week he breaks that covenant (Dan. ix:27). That covenant will probably be the permission given to the Jews to build a temple and to resume their sacrificial worship. The first and the second Beast make a covenant, which marks the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel. But when the little horn, the first Beast, becomes energized by Satan, he breaks that covenant. Then the second Beast demands the worship of the first Beast as well as the worship of himself. This second Beast is the final, personal Anti-

christ. He has two horns like a lamb, and speaks like a dragon. He is a counterfeit lamb and his two horns are an imitation of the priestly and kingly authority of Christ. He is the one of whose coming our Lord spoke (John v:43). He is the man of sin, the son of perdition described by Paul in 2 Thess. ii. He must be a Jew or his claim of being Israel's true Messiah would not be accepted by the Jews.

Daniel also gives an interesting prophetic picture which bears out his Jewish character and his wicked, satanic ways. See Daniel xi:36-39. This second Beast is also called the false Prophet (xvi:13; xix:20; xx:10). He does lying wonders. He reigns as the false king in Jerusalem and sits as god in the temple. He will be the religious head of apostate Judaism and apostate Christendom. It is the strong delusion of the second chapter of Second Thessalonians. He also demands the worship of the first Beast. He makes an image of the first Beast and gives breath to it, so that it can speak. Whoever has not the mark of the Beast on hand and forehead cannot buy nor sell, and whosoever does not worship the Beast will be killed. And those who worship the Beast and receive the mark are lost souls. Great will be the number of martyrs at that time. To find out what the mark is and some of the other details would only be guesswork. No one can imagine the horrors of that time when Satan rules for a short time on earth and produces the great tribulation, such as was not before on earth, nor ever can be again.

But what does the number 666 mean? If we were to state all the different views on this number and the different applications we would have to fill many pages and then we would not know what is right and wrong. Seven is the complete perfect number; six is incomplete and is man's number. Here we have three times six. It is humanity fallen, filled with pride, defying God. The number 666 signifies man's day and man's defiance of God under Satan's power in its culmination.

5. GRACE AND JUDGMENT

CHAPTER XIV.

1. The Lamb and the 144,000. 1-5.
2. The Everlasting Gospel. 6-7.
3. Fall of Babylon Anticipated. 8.
4. Wrath for the Worshippers of the Beast. 9-11.
5. The Blessed Dead. 12-13.
6. The Harvest and the Vintage. 14-20.

1. The Lamb and the 144,000: Verses 1-5. A series of visions follow the dark scenes in chapter xiii. The conditions under the domineering power of the two Beasts are going to be changed. The Lord will answer the prayers of the persecuted Jewish people and deliver them by His personal coming out of the opened heaven. This glorious manifestation is fully revealed in the nineteenth chapter. Here it is anticipated. There is much said about this intervention in behalf of the suffering godly remnant in the Old Testament. As an illustration we call attention to Psalms xliv and xlv. In the forty-fourth Psalm we find a description of their suffering and the cry to heaven: "Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake." In the forty-fifth Psalm the answer to this prayer is recorded. The King riding in majesty, dealing with His enemies, surrounded by redeemed companies, is beheld in that Psalm. The entire Book of Psalms should be studied from the viewpoint of prophecy; it will shed much light upon these events of this portion of Revelation. But who are the 144,000 standing with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, having His Name and His Father's Name written on their foreheads? In the previous chapter we saw a company on earth who have the mark of the Beast on their foreheads; but here is a company who have His Name and the Father's Name on the forehead. A good many have made of this company a portion of the Church, a first-fruits, who, according to this theory, have lived separated lives and are caught up into heaven, while the other believers, who did not live as near to God as they did, will have to suffer in the great tribulation. The reader who has followed the unfolding of this book will see at once that such

an interpretation is impossible. These 144,000 have nothing to do whatever with the Church. And the 144,000 learn to sing this new song. Who then are the harpers? They are the martyred company seen in connection with the fifth seal and they also include now their brethren which were slain during the great tribulation. The characteristics of the 144,000 are next given. Verse 4 must not be interpreted in a literal sense. Those who apply it to a first-fruits of the church have done so, and it has led to much confusion and even worse things. Literal impurity is not in view. If it had a literal meaning this company would consist of men only. The woman, the great harlot Bablyon and her daughters, the God-less and Christ-less religious world-systems (chapter xvii) are then on earth. They did not defile themselves with the corruptions and idolatries prevalent on the earth. They kept themselves from spiritual fornication. They are the first-fruits and the earnest of the blessings soon in store for the earth. They were devoted to the Lamb and no lie (not guile) was in their mouth. The lie and delusion of the end-time were utterly repudiated by them.

2. **The Everlasting Gospel: Verses 6-7.** This has nothing to do with the preaching of the Gospel during this church-age. The Angel must not be taken as a literal angel. The preaching of any Gospel to those who dwell on earth is never committed to angels, but to men. This is true of the Gospel of Grace which redeemed sinners are privileged to proclaim during this age, and of the everlasting Gospel during the end of the age. The Gospel preached is the Gospel of the Kingdom and the preachers are this faithful remnant of God's earthly people. Nothing of this preaching was said in chapter vii, though the result, the gathered multitude coming out of the great tribulation is seen there. But here, where the moral and spiritual characteristics of the remnant of Israel are seen, their testimony also comes into view. What this everlasting Gospel is we need not explain, for verse 7 gives us the information. It is everlasting because it concerns the Creator as the only object

of worship. And it will sound the loudest and go forth in no uncertain sound at the time when pandemonium reigns on earth, and heaven is about to open to manifest the King of Glory. How great is God's mercy! And the nations who hear and turn to God will enter the coming Kingdom. Read in connection with verses 6 and 7 Psalm xcvi. It will give you a great deal of light on this portion of Revelation.

3. The Fall of Babylon anticipated: Verses 8. This is an anticipative announcement of what will also happen as the great tribulation nears its close. The particulars are not given here. These and what Babylon is and how Babylon the great (city must be omitted in this verse) falls, we shall find in chapters xvii and xviii. God's intervention in judgment upon the great whore is simply mentioned here.

4. Wrath for the Worshipers of the Beast: Verses 9-11. Here we have a third angelic announcement. It concerns the worshipers of the Beast. They drink of the wrath of God. It is "without mixture," that is, no mercy is found in the cup of His indignation. It serves as a solemn warning. Babylon falls prior to the glorious appearing of the King, and the Beast will afterward manifest his power as never before. Therefore, the warning concerning the inevitable fate of those who worship the Beast and take its mark.

5. The Blessed Dead: Verses 12-13. It is a voice which proclaims this. It refers especially to those who are martyrs at that time. Certainly all our loved ones who fall asleep in Jesus are blessed. They are absent from the body and consciously present with the Lord. But here is the comfort for those who faithfully resist the worship of the Beast, who refuse to take the mark. They become martyrs. The Book of Revelation will be read and studied during the great tribulation. Satan through the Beasts, will try to annihilate it and the rest of the Bible. But it will be a failure as all former attempts to get the Bible out of the world have failed. Here then, is first the warning. If they worship the Beast they will be lost forever. Then

there is the alternative to resist the Beast and be killed as to the body, but die in the Lord. "From henceforth" means during the tribulation when the great persecution goes on.

6. The Harvest and the Vintage: Verses 14-20. This brings now the coming of the Son of Man with judgment power into view. The harvest and the vintage have come. The sickle is put in. The reapers used will be angels (Matt. xiii:41). The day of vengeance has come. Read Isaiah lxiii:1-6; Joel iii; Zechariah xii-xiv. This will greatly help to a better understanding of the harvest and the vintage. The nations and their armies will be in the land; the Assyrian from the North, foreshadowed by the wicked work of Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan. viii) will do his awful work; the false prophet, the second Beast is in Jerusalem. But then the judgment clouds break. The battle of Armageddon comes into view for the first time in verse 20. How we ought to praise Him, for His infinite grace which has separated us from these awful judgments of vengeance and wrath. His people will be at home when these things come to pass.

6. THE SEVEN VIALS

CHAPTERS XV-XVI.

1. The Victors' Song and Worship. xv:1-4.
2. The Seven Angels Leave the Temple. 5-8.
3. The First Vial. xvi:1-2.
4. The Second Vial. 3.
5. The Third Vial. 4-7.
6. The Fourth Vial. 8-9.
7. The Fifth Vial. 10-11.
8. The Sixth Vial. 12.
9. **Parenthesis.** The Seventh Vial. 13-21.

1. The Victors' Song and Worship: xv: 1-4. And now the last seven angels appear; seven seal judgments first, followed by seven angels with trumpets and next the last seven angels. With these seven angels who have the seven last plagues for the world, the wrath of God is completed. Before these angels go forth we behold another worship

scene. Who are they? Not the twenty-four Elders, but they are the harpers which we saw harping and singing in chapter xiv:2-3. They are the martyred company worshiping in glory. Here we are told of their victory and their song, the song of Moses and of the Lamb. The song of Moses (Exod. xv) is the song of an earthly deliverance and the song of the Lamb concerns a spiritual deliverance. They are redeemed by power and by blood.

2. The Seven Angels Leave the Temple: Verses 5-8. A wonderful sight it is. There is again an ominous silence similar to the silence in connection with the opening of the seventh seal. The silence is not mentioned. But the text shows an impressive scene of silence. Quietly the procession of these ministers of judgment file out of the temple. They are clothed in pure, white linen; this is symbolical of the righteousness which demands the judgment wrath about to be poured out. And the golden girdles with which their breasts are girdled speak still more of divine righteousness. God in His righteousness must judge and now His wrath in completeness is about to be felt on the earth. The angels left the temple empty-handed, but the four living creatures give into their hands the bowls full of the wrath of God. And behind that smoke is the fire of judgment.

3. The First Vial: Chapter xvi:1-2. The great voice commands the seven angels to go on their way and to empty the bowls upon the earth (Ps. lxix:24). And these vials of judgments affect not only the Roman empire, but the entire world, for the whole world is guilty before God. The first vial poured out produces a grievous sore upon the worshipers of the Beast. While it is undoubtedly true that we have symbols also in these vial judgments, it is nevertheless possible that some of these plagues may have, besides the symbolical, also a literal meaning. The sixth plague which came upon Egypt, the first judgment upon the persons of the Egyptians, was also a sore (Exod. ix:10-11). The worshipers of the Beast and of the image will be dreadfully afflicted.

4. The Second Vial: Verse 3. This is poured out into

the sea. The sea represents the Gentiles. These will now experience the wrath of God. See the plague in Egypt (Exod. vii:17-25). That was a literal thing; but not so here. Some apply it to the continued carnage which will be one of the leading features of the final history of the times of the Gentiles. That it presents a state of the most unspeakable corruption and spiritual death is obvious.

5. The Third Vial: Verses 4-7. Another scene in which the blood is prominent. The Apostates denied the blood, sneered at it as the Unitarians and Christian Scientists do in our own days, and now the angel of the waters saith, "Thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy." They have to feel the dreadful results of having rejected the Christ of God and accepted the man of sin. The children of Israel had to taste their own idolatry when Moses put the ashes of the burnt golden calf in the water and made them drink it (Exod. xxxii:20). They have to taste the vileness and bitterness of their apostasy. They reap what they sow. All the joys of life typified by rivers and fountains of water, are poisoned and corrupted. It is a retributive judgment of God falling upon the earth.

6. The Fourth Vial: Verses 8-9. The fourth vial is poured into the sun and men are scorched with great heat. Some also apply this literally, but the symbolical meaning is to be preferred. There can be no doubt that the powers of nature will also bear witness to the wrath of God. Famines, droughts, great floods, volcanic disturbances, great and widespread earthquakes and other physical phenomena will occur throughout these days of tribulation. However, the sun here is not the physical sun, but means, as under the fourth trumpet, the supreme authority governing them (the Roman empire). Under the fourth trumpet great moral darkness came upon all; here it is fearful, fiery agony "scorched with great heat." The government, Satan-ruled as it is, becomes now the source of the most awful torment to those who are under its dominion. God, in judgment and in His wrath, permits those terrible things to come to

pass. Everything under these vial judgments will become more aggravated than under the trumpet judgment.

7. The Fifth Vial: Verses 10-11. Under the fifth trumpet we saw the star fallen from heaven. It synchronizes with chapter xii:7-12—Satan cast out of heaven. Then Satan fallen from heaven gave his power and authority to the Beast, the head of the empire. Here the throne (not seat) of the Beast is dealt with. His throne and his kingdom is deluged with wrath. All becomes darkness.

8. The Sixth Vial: Verse 12. Once more the river Euphrates is mentioned. It dries up when the sixth bowl is poured out so that the way of the kings of the East (literal: from the rising of the sun) might be prepared. We have hinted before at the correspondence between the trumpet judgments and the pouring out of the vials. This now becomes very marked, for under the sixth trumpet the river Euphrates is also mentioned. There the forces which keep back hostile powers are removed and here the river is dried up. As already stated the Euphrates was the boundary of the Roman empire and the land of Israel. It is a kind of barrier which separates the West from the East. This barrier symbolized by the river Euphrates is now completely removed, so that the kings from the sunrise can invade the land. This invasion is also seen in connection with the sixth trumpet. The nations must gather from all quarters in and about Palestine. We find much of this revealed in the Old Testament and it would be strange if the revelation were silent on so important an event. Ezekiel describes a great invader, a confederacy of nations (Ezek. xxxviii and xxxix). Gog, Magog, the Prince of Rosh (Russia), Meshech, Tubel, Persia, Cush and Put are mentioned as forming this confederacy. The term "Kings of the sunrise" may even mean the far Eastern Asiatic nations, like China and Japan. The drying up of the Euphrates seems therefore to mean the removal of the barrier, so that the predicted gathering of the nations may take place (Joel iii:2). What began under the sixth trumpet is consummated when the sixth vial is poured out. It is an act of judgment-wrath, while at the same time

these opposing nations are gathering for the great day of God Almighty.

9. Parenthesis. The Seventh Vial: Verses 13-21. Just as we had a parenthetical vision between the sixth and seventh seal, and between the sixth and seventh trumpet, so we find here a very brief one between the sixth and seventh vial judgment. Armageddon is not yet, but it now comes in view. Unclean spirits, like frogs, creatures of the slimy, evil-smelling swamps and of the night, now proceed out of the mouth of the trinity of evil. The Dragon is Satan; the Beast, the political head of the empire, and the false Prophet, the Antichrist. Satanic influences, emanating from him and his two master-pieces are then at work; and they are of such a nature that we cannot fully understand them. They are the spirits of demons, working miracles.

The seventh angel pours his vial into the air. This is Satan's sphere. His power and dominion are now dealt with in wrath. While Satan was cast out of heaven, he may still maintain part of the atmosphere immediately above the earth, thus upholding his claim as the prince of the power of the air (Eph. ii:2). A great voice declares "It is done." All that follows shows that the climax is reached. The judgment shown is sweeping everything. A great earthquake as under the sixth seal and the seventh trumpet takes place. The great city Babylon is divided into three parts; the cities of the nations fall. It is the hour of collapse, when the stone from above does its smiting work (Dan. ii). "It is done!" The Lord has come. The nineteenth chapter will furnish us the particulars.

7. BABYLON, THE HARLOT AND HER JUDGMENT CHAPTERS XVII-XVIII.

1. The Description of the Woman. xvii:1-6.
2. The Angel's Interpretation. 7-15.
3. The Desolation of the Whore. 16-18.
4. The Angelic Announcement. xviii:1-3.
5. The Call to Separation. 4-5.
6. Her Pride and Destruction. 6-8.
7. Lamentation and Jubilation. 9-20.
8. Her Utter and Eternal Destruction. 21-24.

1. The Description of the Woman: Chapter xvii:1-6. Babylon was mentioned for the first time in this book in chapter xiv:8; her fall was then anticipated. In two chapters we have a description of her and the details of her overthrow and complete destruction. Babylon is seen as a great, world-wide ecclesiastical, political and commercial system, and her dwelling-place, from where she exercises authority, is a great city, which is the seven-hilled city Rome. There are many who believe that the literal Babylon is in view here in these two chapters. It is claimed that literal Babylon on the banks of the Euphrates is to become once more a large city and the seat of government during the end of this age. Literal Babylon never was a part of the Roman empire, and as the Babylon of Revelation xvii and xviii is seen in closest identification with the empire, and for a time at least is at its center and capital, the Babylon in Asia is ruled out at once. Rome was the great center of the Roman empire and Rome will once more become the seat where the woman pictured in this chapter will exercise her authority.

In the first part of this chapter we have a description of the great harlot Babylon. Who, then, is this woman, branded a harlot, whom one of the seven angels who poured out the vials showed to John? She represents the papal system in its final power and control in the world. We shall see how this assertion is fully confirmed by the words of this chapter. We saw in the church-message to Thyatira, which stands for the papacy and its great corruption, that Rome is pictured as the woman Jezebel, corresponding to the woman in the parable of the leaven. And of Thyatira it is said "she repents not." This shows that Rome will continue in her corrupt ways to the end, till judgment overtakes here. She is to be cast into great tribulation (ii:22). When the true Church is caught up, the papal system, as we call it, the Roman Catholic "church" will see a great revival. For a time she has been stripped of the temporal power she once had, but it will be restored to her. Along with the revival of the Roman empire there will be a revival of papal Rome. But we must look very briefly at some of the descriptions

of this woman, the harlot. "She sitteth upon many waters." We find the interpretation in verse 15. "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth are peoples, and multitudes, and nations and tongues." Rome even now can boast of her children among all nations. She gets her support from the whole world. And when she gets her revival she will have a still greater dominion. The kings of the earth will yield once more to her spiritual fornication. Then John saw the woman upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. Who is the Beast she rides? It is the first Beast of chapter xiii, the revived Roman empire. She becomes identified with that empire. Her attire is purple and scarlet and she is decked with gold, precious stones and pearls. The Pope and his Cardinals wear these colors. Purple and scarlet are the leading colors displayed in great Romish celebrations; gold, precious stones and pearls describe her enormous wealth and dazzling glory, so attractive to the natural man. And in her hand was a golden cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. How clearly this describes papal Rome. Her service, called worship, her rituals, her splendid edifices, etc., all are fair to behold and pleasing to the eye, like a golden cup. But inside we find her filthiness in doctrine and in practices. She encourages sin by her indulgences. With the celibacy there is also filth connected. And then the vileness and abomination of the confessional. Her shameless character is written upon her forehead. The true Church is to have His name upon the forehead and the great harlot-system bears an inscription.

2. The Angel's Interpretation: Verses 7-15. The interpreting angel told John who the Beast is, the Beast, that was, and is not, and yet is (verse 8). It is the Roman empire as stated before. It was, in an imperial form in John's day. In the fifth century, A. D., it ceased existing as imperial Rome; it is not. But it is to be again, a revival which is here described as coming out of the pit of the abyss (chapter xiii). Verse 9 shows Rome (seven mountains), where the

woman sitteth. Therefore, Rome speaks of "the See of the Papacy," and "See" is derived from the Latin *Sedes*, which means seat or throne.

The seven kings or heads in verse 10, mean different forms of government of the Roman empire. Five are fallen; these were Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decemvirs and Military Tribunes. These are past forms of government. But in John's day the empire had the imperial form of government. This is the meaning of "one is." The other and final form of the Roman empire "is not yet come." That is in John's day it had not yet come. It is the Satanic revival and control of the empire as we saw it in chapter xiii. And the eighth head, which goeth into perdition, is the man who heads the empire, the little horn, which Daniel saw on the ten-horned Beast. The ten horns in verses 12-13 are the kings. They correspond to the ten toes on Nebuchadnezzar's image and the ten horns on the fourth Beast which Daniel saw coming out of the sea. And these ten kings yield their power and strength unto the Beast. In verse 14, their awful future is seen. We shall see this more fully in chapter xix:11-21. They are going to make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb, who is Lord of lords and King of kings, will overcome them. With Him are the called, the chosen and the faithful, that is the redeemed, who come with Him and are manifested when He appears.

3. The Desolution of the Whore: Verses 16-18. The woman rides the Beast for a short time only. She will not be long successful in her regained power. The ten horns, the ten kingdoms, and the Beast* hate her and turn against the whore. First they were all for her and now they unite in making her desolate and naked and burn her with fire. But more than that "and shall eat her flesh," just as Jezebel was eaten by the dogs. It is God in His righteous judgment who decreed her desolation in this way.

4. The Angelic Announcement: Chapter xviii:1-3. Babylon

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*"And the Beast" is not in the authorized version; it is added in the Revised Version and belongs rightfully in the text.

is now seen under another aspect. In the former chapter we have the religious center of Rome and her wicked idolatries, in the present chapter it includes also the whole system of apostate Christendom in its social and commercial aspect, the so-called "Christian civilization" in its final apostate condition and doom. Papal Rome in her short revival becomes the head of apostate Christendom and controls everything till her appointed doom comes upon her. While we saw in the preceding chapter the desolation of the whore by the ten kings and the Beast, here we see how God views her and that He dethrones this system in His judgment. A strong angel comes down to announce her doom and to lay bare her inner and most awful corruption. A strong descending Angel* whose glory lightened the earth, shows what the boasting thing, she, who bore the blessed name of Christ, has become. She is seen to be the habitation of demons. Even now behind all the denials of the doctrine of Christ and the false doctrines which mark the onward march of the predicted apostasy, demons are the leaders (1 Tim. iv:1).

And the nations drank eagerly her cup and the kings committed fornication with her. These kings are not the ten kings of the Empire for they are used in the judgment of the whore, while the kings mentioned here bewail her destruction (verse 9). And with the system there was connected great commerce; merchants through her became rich.

5. The Call to Separation: Verses 4-5. God always calls out His true children from that which is evil. His own must be a separate people. Saints in past centuries have heard this call and left behind the Romish abominations and thousands sealed their testimony with their blood. And in these days in which our lot is cast, days

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*This angel may represent the Lord Himself. If this is correct we have the third manifestation of our Lord in the garb of an angel: viii:3 in His priestly dignity; x:1 in His royal dignity and here as the herald and executor of the vengeance of God upon Babylon.

of increasing signs, heralding as never before the approaching end and the homecall of His people to meet Him in the air, in these days God demands the separation of His true children. Christendom is becoming daily more and more the religious camp of apostasy. And, therefore, He calls: "Let us go forth unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach" (Heb. xiii:13). He who remains in that which denies His Name, is partaker of her sins (verse 4; compare with 2 John, verses 10-11). As all drifts back to Rome and the coming political and religious confederacy, this final Babylon looms up; God's people must hear that call. To whom is this call addressed? Undoubtedly to the remnant of God's ancient people, the believing remnant and also to that large number of Gentiles who hear the final message, the Gospel of the Kingdom.

6. Her Pride and Destruction: Verses 6-8. Like ancient Babylon, the whole apostate system, Rome and all her offspring, was filled with pride. She was lifted up in all her earthly glory and now God breaks her completely. "She shall be utterly burned with fire." As her smoke is to arise forever and ever (xix:3) it is possible that the proud city, Rome, the center of the system of apostasy and commerce, will be destroyed by volcanic action, and where the seven-hilled city once stood there may be instead an immense crater, testifying throughout the millennium of God's righteous retribution. In view of the volcanic conditions on the Italian peninsula this is more than possible.

7. Lamentation and Jubilation: Verses 9-20. And now follows the great and universal lamentation over the destruction of the great world-system. There is weeping and wailing when at last this anti-christian civilization, all Christendom united with Rome, and for a time controlling the commerce of the world, is wiped out by the hand of God. The kings, the merchants, the shipmasters, the company in ships and sailors, all are seen mourning, weeping and wailing. The destruction of the system and of its proud city affects them all. They bewail their great loss. Notice twenty-eight things are mentioned by them. The

first is gold and the last the souls of men. How this describes Rome! She is the trafficker in souls and the destroyer of souls as well. And in studying the articles of the commerce of apostate Christendom we notice that these are nearly all articles of luxury. The greatest panic has then come and there will be no recovery of the market. The rich men will weep and howl for their misery is come upon them (James v:1). See also Zeph. i:11, 18.

Heaven is called to rejoice over her, and three classes are mentioned (Revised Version), saints, apostles and prophets. "For God hath judged your judgment of her." This is the better rendering. The judgment which the saints pronounced on her is now executed. The next chapter shows us more fully the rejoicing heavens.

8. Her Utter and Eternal Destruction: Verses 21-24. In Jeremiah li:60-64 we read that Seraiah was commissioned by Jeremiah to attach a stone to the book containing the prophet's words and to cast it into the Euphrates. "And thou shalt say, thus shall Babylon sink and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her and they shall be weary." Here an angel took up a millstone and cast it into the sea, showing by this action the complete and final destruction of the wicked system and the equally wicked city. And what revelation there is in the statement "for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived." In chapter xx we read that the old Serpent deceives the nations. Sorceries, wicked spirits, demon-powers blinded the eyes of the nations to follow Rome's seductive lure. And thus it is with a lifeless, spiritless Protestantism and its bloodless Gospel. The sorceries of Rome, the demons underneath it all, attract apostate Christendom so that all will be united in the great, final Babylon.

So that we may not question that both chapters refer to Rome, though the entire Apostate Christendom is also in view, her blood-guiltiness is mentioned once more.

8. THE MANIFESTATION OF THE KING AND THE MILLENNIUM

CHAPTER XIX-XX:6.

1. Heavenly Hallelujahs and the Marriage of the Lamb. 1-10.
2. Heaven Opened. His Visible Manifestation. 11-16.
3. The Battle of Armageddon. 17-21.
4. The Binding of Satan. xx:1-3.
5. The Thousand-Year Reign. 4-6.

1. Heavenly Hallelujahs and The Marriage of the Lamb: Verses 1-10. Once more we find the significant phrase "after these things" (chapter iv:1; vii:1; xviii:1). "After these things"—the things which are described in chapters xvii and xviii, the fall of Babylon and the complete destruction of the whore and the system over which she presided and domineered, after these things, voices in heaven are heard again. We were first introduced to the heavens in this book in the fourth chapter.

In chapter xviii:20 we heard the words addressed to heaven, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her." And now we see heaven rejoicing. "I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven saying, "Hallelujah." Hallelujah means "Praise ye Jehovah." This Hebrew word is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. Four times this word of praise is found in the beginning of this chapter; the Hallelujah times for heaven and earth are imminent. The Book of Psalms closes with many Hallelujahs; the blessed time which the Psalms so often anticipate, when the earth is judged in righteousness and the glory of the Lord is manifested, is now at hand. The praise here is on account of the righteousness of God exhibited in the judgment of the great whore "which did corrupt the earth with her fornication" and because the blood of God's servants shed by her is now avenged. The great multitude whose Hallelujah is heard first must be the company of martyrs who died during the tribulation. The souls under the altar and their brethren which were slain later utter this praise now. They are seen as a distinct company from the

twenty-four Elders. A second Hallelujah is uttered by them, while the smoke of the destroyed city goes up forever and ever.

The whole redeemed company, Old and New Testament Saints, add their Amen and Hallelujah to the outburst of praise on account of the execution of the righteous judgment. And they worship God, for it is His righteousness which accomplished the destruction of the great whore. In the midst of this wonderful and impressive worship-scene the throne begins to be heard. A voice from the throne said: "Give Praise unto God all ye His servants and ye that fear Him both small and great." And the command is at once obeyed. John hears the fourth Hallelujah and it is the greatest, the most magnificent. It is the great Hallelujah-chorus of heaven. Like the voice of many roaring waters, like the voice of mighty thunderings, a great multitude saith, "Hallelujah for the Lord our God Omnipotent reigneth." Who is this great multitude? In the first verse we heard the Hallelujah of the martyred companies. The twenty-four Elders and four living Creatures did not join in this first Hallelujah. Their Hallelujah followed. And now the great outburst of a great multitude. This multitude includes all the redeemed in glory. And they rejoice and give glory for an additional reason which is made known for the first time in this book. The marriage of the Lamb is about to be consummated. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready." The harlot, which claimed to be the bride, being judged, the true bride of Christ is seen in glory. And it is the marriage of the Lamb. His joy is now filled full for He receives her, who is bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. The second Man, the last Adam, is joined to her who is to rule and reign with Him. But who is the bride about to become the Lamb's wife? Some teach that it is Israel to be united with the Lord in the closest bonds. But these expositors forget that the scene is a heavenly one. This marriage does not take place on earth where the faithful remnant

looks up expecting Him to appear for their deliverance, but this marriage is in glory. It is true such relationship is declared to be Israel's in the Old Testament. She was married to Jehovah in a legal covenant and on account of her faithless condition, because Jerusalem played the harlot (Ezek. xvi:35), she was put away. For a time Israel was the wife of Jehovah (Is. liv:1) and then on account of her wickedness became divorced. She will be taken back in the day of her national repentance when the Lord comes. But as one who had been divorced she cannot be a bride again. The bride of Christ to become the Lamb's wife is the Church of the New Testament.

All who accepted Christ as Saviour and Lord since the day of Pentecost constitute the bride of Christ. The Church began on Pentecost and her completion will be the translation to glory (1 Thess. iv:17). She is both the body of Christ and the bride of Christ, as Eve was of the body of Adam and also his bride. The Church is the nearest and the most beloved object of His loving heart.

But how has she made herself ready? And what does it mean, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white for the linen is the righteousness of the saints"? The grace of God has supplied the robe and the precious blood is her title to glory. In this respect she was ready. But the words here refer us to the judgment seat of Christ, that award seat before which we must appear. Then the hidden things are brought to light and the wood and the hay and stubble are burned (1 Cor. iii: 12-15). Then "every man shall have praise of God" (1 Cor. iv:5) and what grace accomplished in each one and through each will be manifested. And the clean white linen "is the righteousness of the saints." The word "righteousness" is in the plural. It means more than the righteousness which we are in Christ or the faith in Him which is counted for righteousness (Rom. iv:3). It includes all the blessed results in life and service produced by the Holy Spirit, the practical righteousness of the saints. And yet even these need the washing in that precious blood without which all

is unclean and unholy. And so it is grace after all, as indicated by the word "given;" (Revised Version) "it was given to her to be clothed in fine linen, bright and pure." He Himself has made her ready and removed every spot, every wrinkle and every blemish. God grant that we His people may daily meditate on this coming glorious event, the marriage of the Lamb, and walk worthy of such a Lord and such a calling. Once more John is commissioned to write: "Write, Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And who can estimate the blessedness of being in His ever blessed Presence, at His table, at the marriage supper of the Lamb!

2. Heaven Opened His Visible Manifestation: Verses 11-16. And now we reach the great event so often mentioned in the Old Testament, the event for which this world is waiting, the visible manifestation of Him, whom the heavens received, who returns to judge the earth, to receive the promised Kingdom and rule over the earth for a thousand years. We have reached the great climax in the Revelation. His own words are now to be fulfilled. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv:29-30).

Impressive words—"And I saw heaven opened." Heaven was opened unto Him when He came out of Jordan at His baptism. While His baptism foreshadowed His death in the sinner's place, His resurrection and ascension are foreshadowed in coming out of the waters and the open heaven. In heaven at the right hand of God He has been ever since, unseen by human eyes. At last the time has come when God is to make His enemies as the footstool of His feet. Heaven is opened so that He might be revealed in His glorious majesty. And out of the opened heavens He

comes forth. He comes as the mighty Victor to judge in righteousness and to make war. "And behold a white horse; and He that sat thereon was called Faithful and True and in righteousness He doth judge and make war." The white horse is symbolical of victorious warfare and glorious conquest. When, seven years before the first seal had been opened (vi:1), a rider appeared upon a white horse achieving great conquest. It was the false king who was then seen in vision. He is as the Beast on earth with the King and their armies to make war with the coming King who comes out of the opened heaven. Glorious sight! He is coming to conquer and to claim His inheritance. The appointed day has come in which God "will judge the world in righteousness by that man, whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts xvii:31). Upon His head are many diadems. The saints wear crowns, but He to whom belongs all power in heaven and on earth wears many diadems, encircling His head in dazzling splendor.

"And He had a name written, that no man knew but Himself." And again it is written "His Name is called the Word of God." And on His vesture and on His thigh there is a name written, "King of kings and Lord of lords." The unknown Name is the name of His essential Deity. No human name can express what He is in Himself. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." His Name "the Word of God" refers us to the Gospel of John. As the Word He is the express image of God, that is He makes God visible. He is the expression of God in His character, His thoughts and counsels. And the third name mentioned "King of kings and Lord of lords" expresses what He is in relation to the earth.

"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood"—"And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations, and He shall rule them with a rod of iron, and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." The blood-dipped vesture has nothing to do with His work on the cross. He

is described in Isaiah lxiii:1-4 as the One who has the day of vengeance in His heart, and this passage in Isaiah is here being fulfilled. The two-edged sword refers us to Isaiah xi:4. "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked."

But He is not alone. The armies of heaven follow the great King. They are, like Him, upon white horses and are clothed in fine linen, white and clean. These armies are not angels. It is true, angels will be with Him as He comes, for it is written, then He shall be revealed with His holy angels. Angels will be the reapers in the judgment (Matt. xiii:41) when the age ends and they will be used in the re-gathering of Israel. (Matt. xxiv:31). But the armies here are not angels. They are the glorified saints; the fine linen, white and clean, identifies them fully. In faith and blessed assurance, you, dear reader, and the writer can say, we shall be in that company with Himself as leader. The Son brings His many sons unto glory (Heb. ii:10). What a sight that will be for the earth-dwellers! Each in that company bears His own image; each reflects His own Glory.

3. The Battle of Armageddon: Verses 17-21. And what a sublime vision comes next! An angel is beheld by the Seer standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he summons the birds that fly in mid-heaven to gather themselves to the great supper of God to eat the flesh of the slain. The birds of prey are summoned in anticipation of the battle of Armageddon which is then imminent. And now the hour of judgment has come. An angel, standing in the sun, the place of supreme authority, gives the invitation to the birds of prey to be ready for the feast which a holy and righteous God will have for them. The day of wrath has come. The slain of the Lord shall be many (Isaiah lxvi:16).

And down on earth there is the greatest gathering of armies the world has ever seen. The Beast, the head of the revived Roman empire, is the commander-in-chief. The kings of the earth are with him. Vast armies camp on all sides. The great valley on the plains of Esdraelon is filled with soldiers. The hills and mountains swarm with

armed men. Satan's power has gathered and blinded this vast multitude to the utmost. The unclean spirits, the demons working miracles, have brought them together to the battle of that day. And the hordes from the North, under the Prince of Rosh are coming later. These vast multitudes from the North and beyond Euphrates are described in Ezekiel xxxviii-xxxix. And in that Old Testament prophecy we find a statement which reminds us of the great supper of God in Revelation. "Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, assemble yourselves and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood" (Ezek. xxxix:17). "Thus shall ye be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord God" (verse 20).

Zechariah xiv:2 is now being fulfilled. While the vast armies are covering valleys and hills, the objective will be Jerusalem. All nations are gathered against her. "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." And now as these armies are massed together the great battle of Armageddon takes place. They are ready to make war against Him, who comes through heaven's portals. "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations." (Zech. xiv:2). The battle does not consume much time. Sennacherib's army was suddenly smitten and they all perished, and here are armies in comparison with which Sennacherib's forces were insignificant. One mighty blow from above, one flash of glory and all their strength and power is gone. The stone has fallen (Dan. ii). With one blow the dominion and misrule of the Gentiles is at an end. The Kings of the present day might profitably listen to Nebuchadnezzar's letter in Daniel iv. He began at the times of the Gentiles, and has left this letter to be read by his successors. The words our Lord

spoke while on earth "on whom this stone falls it shall grind him to powder" have been fulfilled (Matt. xxi:44). Such is the awful fate which "Christian civilization (?)" and "Kultur (!)" and a Christless christendom is rapidly approaching. And while the armies perish as to the body and God's wrath sweeps the earth clean of the mass of apostates, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel, the Beast (the head of the empire) and the false Prophet (the second Beast of chapter xiii), that is the false Messiah, the Antichrist, are cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. They were not annihilated, for a thousand years later we still find them there (xx:10); and still they are in existence and will ever be as individuals in that place of eternal punishment. And those that were slain as to the body will be raised after the millennium and also share the place with the two, whom they followed and worshipped.

4. The Binding of Satan: Chapter xx:1-3. And now Satan, who was cast out of heaven three and one-half years before the visible and glorious coming of the Lord, and who has been on earth in person, though not beheld by human eyes, is seized to be put into his prison for a thousand years. And the demons, who were liberated by Satan (chapter ix) are likewise shut up in the bottomless pit, though this is not mentioned because it is self-evident. The terms "key" and "great chain" are of course figurative. He is mentioned in all his infamous titles. He is called dragon on account of his horrible cruelty and vileness, the old serpent on account of his maliciousness, guile and deception; he is the devil, the arch-tempter of man, and Satan because he is the accuser of the brethren, the one who opposed Christ and His people. He is now dethroned as the god of this age, completely stripped of his power; and his dethronement means the complete enthronement of our Lord Jesus Christ. And here is the important statement that this being, the once glorious Lucifer, the Son of the morning and light-bearer, who fell through pride, has been the deceiver of the nations.

5. The Thousand Year Reign of Christ: Verses 4-6. Thrones are seen next by the Seer. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them." Daniel also saw thrones in connection with the judgment of the Beast, but nothing is said of those occupying the thrones in Daniel's vision. Here we have the complete revelation, and several times the blessed statement is made that Christ and His saints shall reign with Him for a thousand years. The new age in which all things are put in subjection under His feet, the personal reign of Christ, in which all His redeemed people have a share, begins. It will last a thousand years. Six times we read of the thousand years in this chapter. Because this coming age will last a thousand years it has been called by the Latin word "millennium;" not a few have made the astonishing declaration that such a period of time during which Christ and His Saints reign over the earth has but little foundation in the Scripture. It is quite true that the only place in which the duration of such an age is given is this great final Book of Revelation. And that should be sufficient for any Christian to believe in such an age of a thousand years. However, this age of unspeakable blessing and glory for this earth is revealed throughout the entire Bible. The Old Testament contains hundreds of unfulfilled promises of blessing for Israel, the nations of the earth and even for all creation, which have never seen even a partial fulfillment. Isaiah is full of such promises. In the New Testament there are also passages which clearly teach and point to such an age of glory for this earth. Read Matt. xix:28; Acts iii:19-21; Romans viii:19-23; Eph. 1:10; Col. i:20; Phil. ii:9-11. What awfully disheartening pessimism it would be of we had to believe that the terrible conditions prevailing on the earth now, conditions which have steadily become worse, were to continue and that man's work is to remedy them and produce something better. This earth has a bright and glorious future. Nations will some day no longer turn, as they do now their plowshares into swords, but change their swords into plowshares. Righteousness

and peace will surely kiss each other and creation's curse and travail pains will end. Mercy and truth meet together.

But when? Never as long as the great unfoldings of this book, which we have briefly followed, have not come to pass. There can be no better day for the earth as long as He is absent and not on the throne which belongs to Him. But when He comes, when He has appeared in glory and in majesty, then the earth will find her rest and groaning creation will be delivered. As we do not write on the great blessings and glories to come when He comes, we must refrain from following these things. Here in our book the revelation is given that Christ shall reign for a thousand years and His Saints shall reign with Him. Let us notice briefly the different classes mentioned who are associated with Christ in His personal reign. The entire company of the redeemed, as we saw them under the symbolical figure of the twenty-four Elders, occupying thrones and wearing crowns, are undoubtedly meant by the first statement "they sat upon them and judgment was given unto them." They judge with Him. This is the raptured company whom we saw first in glory in chapters iv and v; and we, dear fellow-believer, belong to this company. Then follow the martyrs, whom we saw under the fifth seal (vi:9-11): "And I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded on account of the testimony of Jesus and for the Word of God." Then we have a third company. "And I saw those who had not worshiped the Beast, nor his image, and had not received his mark on their forehead, or in their hands." These are the other martyrs who were slain during the great tribulation, when the Beast set up the image and demanded its worship (xiii). They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The first resurrection is passed and all who have part in it reign with Christ, are priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years. Oh! wonderful grace which has saved us! Grace which has saved us in Christ and through His ever precious blood delivered us from eternal perdition! Grace which saved us from Satan's power, from sin and all its curse! Grace which has lifted

into such heights of glory and has made us the sons of God and the joint-heirs of the Lord Jesus Christ! And how little after all we enter into all these things, which ought to be our daily joy and delight. How little we know of the power of the coming glory of being with Christ and reigning with Him!

9. AFTER THE THOUSAND YEARS. THE NEW JERUSALEM CHAPTERS XX:7-XXII:5.

1. Satan's Last Revolt. 7-10.
2. The Great White Throne. 11-15.
3. The Eternal State. xxi:1-8.
4. The Vision of the Holy City. 9-27.
5. The Glories of the Redeemed. xxii:1-5.

1. Satan's Last Revolt: Verses 7-9. Satan who was put into the abyss a thousand years before, is now loosed out of his prison. God permits him to come forth once more. Who could have ever thought of such a thing! The arch-enemy who had done his vile and wicked work among the human race, for a thousand years put at last into the place of perfect restraint, and now loosed once more to continue, for a brief season, his work! And he finds nations ready for his deception, not a few, but a number "as the sand of the sea." God permits Satan to come out of his prison, so that the absolute corruption of man might be demonstrated. Man has been tried and tested under every possible condition. He has failed in every age. He failed under the law and he failed even more in the grace-dispensation; and now, under the most glorious conditions, during the millennium, when the Lord Himself is known in all the earth and reigns in righteousness, when want and nearly all the sorrows of a ruined creation are banished, when there is peace on earth, man also fails and does not fully respond to a gracious Lord. But here is a difficulty which many have. Many a sincere post-Millennialist, who has studied the pre-millennial coming of our Lord, has asked this question, "If the whole world is converted during the millennium, how is it then that Satan finds nations ready to side

with him after the thousand-year reign of Christ and then leads them on to destruction?" The difficulty is far from being as great as it is generally made. In fact it is easily explained. As far as Israel is concerned, the all Israel living, when He comes, the trusting remnant of Israel, they will constitute the blessed nation in possession of all her promised blessings. They are not mentioned as siding with Satan. No more back-sliding for that nation. Isaiah lix:20-21 vouches for this.

And the Gentile nations in the beginning of the millennium will also be converted. However, the human conditions of the earth will continue. The nations are not in a glorified state. Marriage will continue. Children will be born during the millennium. Indeed the earth will be populated as never before. Billions of human beings can be sustained upon our planet and they will come into existence by natural generation during the golden age of glory. Wars will be unknown. No longer will the flower of manhood be cruelly murdered by human passion in that legalized horrible thing called war. Earthquakes will no longer sweep thousands upon thousands into an untimely grave, nor can famines and pestilences claim their millions. Nor will there be the great infant mortality. Physical death will no longer be the universal rule, but rather an exception (See Isaiah lxv:20). Now every child born during the millennium of the converted nations comes into the world the same as the children in the present age, it is still true, conceived and born in sin. And it is equally true, they must be born again. And as many children of pious, godly parents in this age are Gospel hardened and live on in sin, though they hear the Gospel and see its power, so in the millennium, an enormous multitude will see the glory, live under the best and most glorious conditions the earth has seen since the fall of man, and yet they will be Glory hardened and only submit to the righteousness of that age and yield obedience through fear, for disobedience to the governing laws of the kingdom on earth, will mean sudden and certain judgment. It is not the obedience produced by a

believing, trusting heart, but only a feigned obedience. Three prophetic Psalms which speak of these millennial conditions make this clear, if we consider the marginal reading. "As soon as they hear of Me, they shall obey Me, the strangers shall yield feigned obedience unto Me" (Ps. xviii:44). "Say unto God, How terrible art Thou in Thy works! Through the greatness of Thy power shall Thine enemies yield feigned obedience unto Thee" (Ps. lxvi:3). "The haters of the Lord yield feigned obedience unto Him, *but* their time might have endured forever" (lxxxi:15). Study these Psalms in their millennial bearing. Thus many nations submit while sin is in their heart and in their blindness they long and hope for the day when they may cast off the restraint. And that day comes when Satan is loosed out of the prison to deceive these nations again.

It was the final attempt of the dethroned usurper to regain his lost dominion. For thousands of years, in the all-wise purposes of God, he was permitted to be the prince of the power of the air and the god of this age. We have followed his history in this book and seen how he was cast out of heaven upon the earth where he caused the great tribulation. Then we beheld him stripped of all his power. The kingdoms of the world became the kingdom of Christ and the old serpent was cast unto the abyss where he remained a thousand years. Loosed for a little season he tried once more to become earth's master. And fire out of heaven devoured the nations who had revolted. The devil receives his final doom. He is cast unto the lake of fire and brimstone. He goes to a fixed place, a locality where unspeakable and eternal torment is his portion. This place is prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. xxv:41). And all the wicked will share that place. And he finds others there. The first beings who were cast into this final abode were the Beast (the emperor of the Roman empire, the little horn of Dan. vii), and the false prophet (the personal Antichrist, the second Beast of chapter xiii). They were put there a thousand years before, and as they are there as persons it shows they were not annihilated.

And they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever—for the ages of ages—never ending—for all eternity. What a solemn truth this is! Yet men meddle with it and deny future, conscious and eternal punishment. Besides these three persons, the nations who were judged and condemned in the beginning of the millennium, when the Son of Man sat upon the throne of His glory (Matt. xxv:31), are also in the Lake of Fire.

3. The Great White Throne: Verses 11-15. And now we reach the last great judgment scene of God's holy Word. Much confusion prevails among Christians about this judgment. There is no such thing in the Word of God as a universal judgment, nor is there a universal resurrection. Every human being that has died will be raised at some time. Our Lord spoke (John v:28) of two resurrections, a resurrection unto life and a resurrection unto judgment. The Revelation speaks of the first resurrection. "This is the first resurrection" (xx:5). And previously the Apostle wrote of a resurrection from among the dead (Phil. iii:11). The first resurrection was finished in the beginning of the millennium. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." The rest of the dead come now into view and they are of necessity the wicked dead, who died in their sins, and whose is the resurrection unto judgment. Some, like "Pastor" Russell, who echoes the evil teachings of others, have invented a third resurrection, a resurrection of the unsaved for a second chance. In the light of this final Bible book there is no room whatever for such a resurrection, which would give the lost another opportunity. Nor does the rest of the Bible mention such a third resurrection. And this great judgment is not a universal judgment. It is taught that the entire human race, the living and the dead, will appear before this great throne. But this is incorrect, for it saith "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." No living people are there at all. Again the judgment-scene in Matthew xxv:31, etc., is spoken of as being the universal judgment and identical with the judgment here in Revel-

ation. But this is another error. In the judgment of Matthew xxv the dead are not there, but living nations are judged in the beginning of the millennium. And these nations are judged on account of the treatment of the Jewish preachers of the Gospel of the Kingdom heralded by them during the last seven years of the age. They did not accept the last offer of mercy and that is why they treated the messengers as they did. Furthermore, the throne which the Son of Man occupies in Matthew xxv is upon the earth; the throne in Revelation xx:11 comes into view after earth and heaven fled away. The church and the Saints of God are not concerned at all in the judgment of Matthew xxv, nor in the great white throne judgment. They are at that time in His own presence glorified. Every Christian should have these things clearly defined and know that for him, as in Christ, there is no more judgment or condemnation (John v:24; Rom. viii:1). The judgment seat of Christ before which believers have to appear (2 Cor. v:10) does not concern their eternal salvation, but their works and rewards.

Who is the occupant of this great White Throne? Not God the Father, but God the Son. "The Father judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John v:22). The earth and heaven fled from His face. Sin-stained and defiled as they were they flee away from the face of the holy One. The great conflagration of 2 Peter iii:7-12* takes place. Fire of judgment swept the earth before the millennium, the day of the Lord, began; but the all consuming fire comes after the millennium. Out of that great conflagration there arises a new heaven and a new earth (xxi:1).

But what about the millions of saved Israelites and Gentiles who are on the millennial earth? Where are they during this great conflagration? What becomes of them? That they share the eternal blessings and glories in the eternal state is certain. But their abode between the burn-

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*See Annotations 2 Peter iii.

ing of the earth and the calling into existence of the new heaven and the new earth is unrevealed. Speculation on it would be wrong. We should accept the silences of Scripture as much in faith as we accept the promises of God.

And John sees the dead standing before the Throne. Books were opened and another book was opened, the book of life. "And the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works." The books are symbolical; conscience and memory will speak loudly. Twice we read that they are judged according to their works. And in the "Book of Life" none of their names were written, or they would not have been in that company. "All this would seem to show that, though a millennium has passed since the first resurrection, yet no *righteous* dead can stand among this throng. The suggestion of the "Book of Life" has seemed to many to imply that there are such; but it is not said that there are, and the words "whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" may be simply a solemn declaration (now affirmed by the result) that grace is man's only possible escape from the judgment."*

The second resurrection takes place. The sea gives up the dead and death and hades give up the dead. Hades gives up the souls, and Death, used here for the grave, gives up the bodies. Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. Both had come into existence because man had sinned, and, therefore, they are cast into the place where all belongs which is contrary to the holiness and righteousness of God. And then that solemn word! "And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." It corresponds to that other solemn statement in John iii:36. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him." To be written in the "Book of Life' means to have life in Christ. Not our works, not our character, not our religiousness, not

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*Numerical Bible.

our tears, our prayers or our service can put our names in the "Book of Life." Grace alone can do it, and grace does it, as we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Reader! is *your* name written there?

The saints of God are in eternal glory; the wicked dead, the lost, are in an eternal lake of fire and suffer conscious, eternal punishment. And how man, blind, presumptuous man; yea, even such who know God, rise up against this solemn truth, the eternal punishment of the wicked. They accuse God of injustice, as if the judge of all the earth would not do right. That the suffering of the lost differs is obvious. It is eternal, because the evil condition remains unchanged. There is no repentance, no faith, no new birth in hell. As there are different rewards for the faithful service of the saints, so are there different degrees of punishment for the unsaved (Luke xii:47-48). This is the second death, not blotting out of existence, but endless in separation from God.

3. The Eternal State: Chapter xxi:18. And now the eternal state comes into view. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and the sea is no more." This is the revelation concerning the final and eternal state of the earth. "Thou hast established the earth and it abideth" (Ps. cxix:90); "But the earth abideth forever" (Eccl.i:4). These divine statements are now fulfilled. Many Christians have a very vague conception of the eternal state of the earth and the abode of the redeemed. They think of it as a spiritual state destitute of any locality. But it is not so. The earth and the heaven abide as definite places throughout all eternity. What a marvellous fact this is! In chapter xx:11 we read that the earth and the heaven fled away and there was found no place. We saw that at that time the great conflagration of which Peter speaks took place, when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements, shall be dissolved with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter iii:10). But we read in the same chapter "nevertheless we, according to His promise look for new

heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (verse 13). During the millennium righteousness reigns upon the earth, but now a state comes for the earth when righteousness shall dwell there. The great burning up meant not an annihilation of the earth and the heavens; God does not annihilate anything, nor does Scripture teach an annihilation of material things and much less the annihilation of human beings, as false teachers claim. The conflagration of the earth and the heaven means their complete purification. The heaven mentioned cannot be the entire heavens; for there is a heaven which cannot be touched by these fires of purification. The heaven is that which surrounds the earth and which was once the peculiar sphere of the great usurper, the prince of the power in the air. And when Peter writes that all this is according to His promise, he has a well-known prophetic statement in Isaiah in mind. "For as the new heaven and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain" (Isaiah lxvi:22). See also lxv:17). From this statement we get definite information that the redeemed Israel established upon the new earth will throughout the eternal state be distinct from the saved nations. They will throughout all eternity bear witness of God's faithfulness as the covenant keeping God. The new heaven and the new earth are therefore the abodes of the redeemed. The new earth, the eternal glory spot of redeemed Israel and the redeemed nations. And the new Jerusalem will come out of heaven to fill the new earth and the new heaven as well. "And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

The new Jerusalem, the holy city, comes into view. During the millennium the city of Jerusalem was known as the place of glory for the earth. Numerous Old Testament predictions were fulfilled. In chapter xx:9, she is called "the beloved city." But in Revelation iii:12 we have another Jerusalem mentioned, the same city which John sees coming down out of heaven, the place of the highest

glory. It is the abode of the church in all her glory; the statement "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" establishes this beyond controversy. She is called "holy" for all is holy; and a "city" because the Saints are in blessed communion and fellowship there. In the highest glory she had her abode. But now she is being revealed in all her eternal glory and beauty. During the millennial reign this wonderful city was above the earth and from there Christ reigned and His saints with Him. But here she comes down out of heaven. A thousand years before the marriage of the lamb had taken place (xix:7-8), and now after a thousand years of unspeakable glory, she is still seen "as a bride adorned for her husband." And yet all these things are given in figurative language. What will be the reality! The masterwork of God is at last fully manifested; what He accomplished through Him, who left the Glory to die on the Cross, is made known. The eternal, never ending riches, purchased by Him who was rich and became poor for our sakes, are beginning to be displayed in all their unfading splendor. Then the saints of God will learn to know the full meaning of Eph. ii:7, "that in the ages to come He might display the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." "And I heard a loud voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." This is the glorious consummation. It is the goal of a holy, loving God. In Eden He visited man unfallen, walked and talked with Him. Then sin severed this fellowship. He dwelt in the midst of Israel in the holiest of the tabernacle. In this age the church is His habitation by the Spirit, but the blessed consummation in the eternal state will result in God dwelling with His redeemed Creatures. What holy, glorious, never-ending intimacy that will be! It is the time when God is all in all (1 Cor. xv:28). When that time has come all the former things are passed away. "And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither

shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Tears, death, sorrow, crying, pain and suffering, these came into existence through sin. And all these things, the effects of sin, are now gone. What relief and what joy!

And next comes the eternal state of those who have rejected the Gospel, who lived in their sins and died in their sins, unsaved, unregenerated. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." God still speaks. How many false teachers are meddling to-day with the solemn Scripture doctrine on the endless punishment of the wicked.

5. The Vision of the Holy City: Verses 9-27. With the ninth verse we are brought back once more to the millennial state. What was briefly stated in chapter xx:4-6 is now more fully revealed and we have a description of the Bride, the Lamb's wife, in her millennial glory, in relation to Israel and to the nations on the earth. One of the angels which had the seven vials appears on the scene to show something to the Seer. We had a similar scene in chapter xvii:1-3. There one of these angelic bearers of the vials showed to John the harlot woman and her judgment; but now he is to see the Bride, the Lamb's wife. "And he carried me away in the Spirit, and set me on a great, high mountain and showed me the holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God." She is seen coming down out of heaven. This coming down precedes the one mentioned in verses 2-3 by a thousand years. Her coming down does not mean here that she actually comes down upon the earth, to dwell on earth during the millennium. Her coming out of heaven in verses 2-3 is undoubtedly to the new earth. But here she comes down to be over the earth.

For a fuller exposition of the symbolical language we refer the reader to the larger exposition of Revelation by the author. We mention briefly that the foundations of the heavenly Jerusalem are twelve precious stones.

The Jasper again stands first; the wall itself is of Jasper, while the first foundation stone mentioned is also Jasper. It stands for the Glory of God. Then the stones follow in their order. The Sapphire (blue); the Chalcedony (a combination of grey, blue and yellow); the Emerald (green); the Sardonyx (a pale blue); the Sardius (blood red); Chrysolite (purple and green); the Beryl (bluish green); the Topaz (pale green or golden); the Chrysoprasus (mixed blue, green and yellow); the Jacinth (combination of red, violet and yellow), and the Amethyst (purple). And what must be the deeper meaning of all these precious stones! What varied aspects of the Glory of God they must represent! And the redeemed in their heavenly city shall know, understand and enjoy it all. What wonderful, unspeakable glory is ahead of us! May we look forward to it every day and willingly serve and suffer the little while down here.

The city itself was seen by John as of pure gold. Gold typifies the righteousness of God in His nature and such the holy city is, composed of the saints who were made through grace the partakers of the divine nature. "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each one of the several gates was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold as it were transparent glass." How suitable the pearl to form each gate, the entrance to the city divine. The Pearl is a type of the Church. She is the one pearl of great price for which the Lord gave all He had (Matt. xiii:45-46). And the golden street like unto pure glass shows that all the ways and walks in that city are according to righteousness and that defilement is eternally impossible.

And there was no temple in that city; the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. There is no need any longer of a certain access into the presence of God, as it was on earth, but there is a free and unhindered fellowship with God and with His ever-blessed Son, the Lamb. Precious it is to hear Him again mentioned as the Lamb. His blessed work which He accomplished can never be forgotten by the Saints in Glory. And the light is not created light, but the light is the Glory of God and the lamp thereof

is the Lamb. The Glory of God and Christ, the Lamb of God, will be the light and supersede all created light.

"And the nations shall walk by its light and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor unto it*; and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations unto it." From this we learn that the glory light which shines eternally and undiminished in the holy city is the light in which the saved millennial nations on the earth walk. And the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor unto it; not "into" as it is rendered in the Authorized Version. The heavens then rule, for Christ and His co-heirs are in that holy city, and the government and rule over the earth proceeds from there. The kings bring their glory and honor unto it, they bow in homage in the presence of the holy city. Heaven is acknowledged as the source of all light, glory and blessing. When the nations and the kings of the earth go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord of Hosts during the millennial age (Psal. lxxii:8-11; Is. lx:1-3; Zech. xiv:16) we doubt not, they will turn their faces upward. Mount Zion in Israel's land will have resting upon it the glory and above it the vision of the City in which the Glory dwells and from which the Glory emanates. And unto it they bring honor and glory. The open gates, never closed, denote security and suggest also communication and intercourse with the earth. "There shall be no night there"; the night of sin and sorrow is forever gone for the dwellers in the holy city. "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

5. The Glories of the Redeemed: Chapter xxii: 1-5. After the coming, Jerusalem and her blessings are once more revealed. In the opening verses of this chapter we find the glories of the Redeemed.

Unspeakably beautiful and glorious are the concluding

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*This is the better rendering.

statements of this glory-section of the Revelation. Seven glories of the Redeemed are enumerated. 1. There will be no more curse. It means a perfect sinlessness; perfect holiness. 2. The throne of God and of the Lamb is there and the redeemed are forever linked with that throne. It is a perfect and blessed governemnt which can never be disturbed by disorder. 3. His servant shall serve Him. Heaven will not consist in idleness. The holy city knows of service. And the service the saints will render to God in glory will be a perfect service. What will it be? We do not know what service it will be. God will have many surprises for His saints in glory. 4. There is also an eternal vision. "And they shall see His face." Oh! joy of all the joys in glory to see Him as He is and never lose sight of Him in all eternity. 5. His name shall be in their foreheads. It tells of eternal ownership and eternal possession. His name and the Glory connected with it will be ours in eternal ages. 6. An eternal day. No more night; no need of any light. He is the light for all eternity. 7. An eternal reign. And they shall reign forever and ever. What glory and blessedness all this means. Such are the coming glories of the Redeemed.

10. THE FINAL MESSAGES

CHAPTER XXII:6-21.

1. The Angel's Message. 6-11.
2. The Message of the Lord. 12-13.
3. The Two Classes. 14-15.
4. His Final Testimony. 16.
5. The Answer of the Spirit and the Bride. 17.
6. The Final Warning. 18-19.
7. The Final Word—the Final Prayer. 20-21.

1. The Angel's Message: Verses 6-11. Here it is an angel who speaks. "And the Lord God of the holy Prophets (literal: of the spirits of the Prophets) sent his angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done." This reminds us of the beginning of the book, where we find a similar announcement. Suddenly some day these things will come to pass. The Lord will call His people to glory

in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and then these things John had beheld will shortly come to pass. And then His own voice breaks in: "Behold I come quickly; Blessed is He that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this Book." Three times we find this announcement in the last chapter (verses 7, 12 and 20). Here it is connected with the walk of the believer. Just as in the beginning of the book a blessing is pronounced upon them that read the words of this prophecy (i:3), so we have at the close of Revelation a similar beatitude. And keeping these blessed words means more than believing in them; their power is to shape our conduct and walk. What godly lives God's people would live on earth, what unselfish and sacrificing lives, if they remembered constantly Him who thus testifies three times in the last chapter of the Bible "Behold I come quickly." Note the awful results in Christendom to-day for not having kept the sayings of the Prophecy of this Book.

Then the Seer is told not to seal the sayings of this prophecy. Daniel was told to do the opposite (Dan.xii:4). Old Testament prophecy reveals prophetic events in the far distance. They could then not be fully comprehended. But after Christ came and the full revelation of things to come is given, no sealing is needed; the events are at hand, yet grace has delayed and delays still the fulfillment. And the heavenly messenger announces also the fixed state of the two classes into which all humanity is divided. The unjust and filthy, the unsaved, continue to exist in the nature which they possess, and the fact that the desires of that corrupt nature can no longer be gratified must constitute in itself an unspeakable torment. The righteous and holy, those saved by grace, partakers of the divine nature, will always be righteous and holy.

2. The Message of the Lord: Verses 12-13. And now the Lord speaks again. For the second time He announces His coming. Here it is in connection with rewards. "My reward is with Me." He Himself will receive His reward which is due Him as the sin-bearer. He will see the travail of His soul and be satisfied. And with His coming, His own people will

receive their rewards. What a stimulating power His soon coming is to service! And the coming One is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

3. The Two Classes: Verses 14-15. Once more the two classes come into view. This is in fullest keeping with the end of the Book and the end of the Bible. The Authorized Version here is faulty. Instead of "Blessed are they that do His commandments" the correct reading is "Blessed are they that wash their robes." The former is an interpolation; the latter is the divine statement.* Eternal life and eternal glory cannot be obtained by keeping commandments, by the works of the law. The blood of the Lamb alone is the title to glory. And then the other class. The one who rejects Christ, and thereby denies his lost condition and need of a Saviour, loveth and maketh a lie. He lives according to the old nature and the fruits of the flesh are there.

4. His Final Testimony: Verse 16. How He speaks in this last Bible book! In the beginning of Revelation we find His self-witness in the church-message and once more we hear His voice, bearing testimony to Himself. How majestic: I, Jesus! He reveals Himself once more by the name of humiliation. What comfort it must have been to John! What comfort it is to us! Then He speaks of Himself as the Root and Offspring of David. He is David's Lord and David's son (Psalm cx:1). He is the Hope of Israel and in Him the promises made to David will all be realized. This will be the case when He comes to reign in power and great glory. But He also speaks of Himself as "the bright and morning-star." His coming in power and glory is the sunrise for Israel and the Gentiles, the breaking of the millennial day. But for His Church He comes first as the morning-star, as the morning-star in the eastern sky precedes the rising of the sun in all its glory. The Lord will come as the morning-star some time in the interval between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel and

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*All leading scholars like Alford, Darby, etc., make the change. Even the Vulgate has it "Beati, qui lavant stolas suas in sanguinem Agni."

as the Sun of Righteousness after that week has come to an end.

5. The Answer of the Spirit and the Bride: Verse 17. As soon as He mentions Himself as the morning-star, there is an answer from the earth. The Spirit now down here, for He came down from heaven on Pentecost, and the Bride, the Church, say, "Come." It is addressed to the Lord. They both long for His coming. And each individual believer who heareth is asked to join with this "Come." Surely in these days of darkness and world-confusion, the Spirit saith, "Come!" And never before were there so many individual believers on earth who say "Come," who wait for His coming. And the Come—from loving hearts—will increase and become a loud and pleading cry, till one blessed day He will answer and come to take His waiting people home. Here also is the final Gospel message of the Bible. He that will, let him take the water of life freely. Once more a loving God makes it clear that the water of life is free to all who want it. It is the last "Whosoever" in the Bible.

6. The Final Warning: Verses 18-19. And what a solemn warning is given! In a larger sense the warning applies to the entire Word of God. Higher criticism, which takes away, and false teachers, who add unto it, find written here their deserved judgment. But the Revelation is specially in view. Whosoever meddles with His Revelation must fall under the severest divine displeasure. Beware! oh ye critics! Beware! ye who call this Book uninspired and warn against the study of it!

7. The Final Word—the Final Prayer: Verses 20-21. We reach the final statements of this great Book. For the third time He announces His coming. "He that testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly." It is the last time our Lord speaks from heaven. The next time His voice will be heard will be on that day when He descends out of heaven with a shout. While the two former announcements of His coming found in this chapter are preceded by the word, "Behold," this last one affirms the absolute certainty of the event. And there is the answer, the blessed

response. "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." It is the Church which answers His positive and certain announcement. It is the last word recorded in the Bible coming from the lips of man. The first word we hear man address to the Lord in the Bible is the solemn word "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid" (Gen. iii:10). The last word addressed to the Lord by redeemed man is "even so, come, Lord Jesus." And between these two utterances in Genesis and Revelation is the story of redemption. Well might this final prayer of the Bible be termed the forgotten prayer. But it is equally true, with the revival of the study of prophecy, more hearts and lips are praying to-day for His Coming, than ever before. And the prayer will be answered. May the reader and the writer pray for His Coming daily and may our lives too bear witness to the fact that we expect Him to answer the petition of His people. The final benediction assures us once more of the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The better rendering is "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints."

Appendix

Prominent Names and Their Symbolical Meaning in Revelation

Abaddon. (Chapter ix:11.) Destruction. The King over the Locust army, denoting Satan and his agencies.

Abyss, The. (ix:1; xx:1-3.) The pit of the abyss or the deep. This expression occurs seven times in Revelation. Out of the deep, the lowest pit, there comes the demon and into the pit of the abyss Satan will be cast for 1,000 years. The Lake of Fire is a different place.

Accuser, The. Satan is the accuser of the Brethren. xii:10. His expulsion out of heaven occurs in the middle of the week, followed by the great tribulation on earth.

Alpha. The first letter in the Greek alphabet; Omega is the last letter. Therefore Alpha and Omega is equivalent to an A and Z. Symbolical of the first and the last (i:8; xxi:6; xxii:13).

Amen, The. A name of our Lord. He is the "verily," the truth, and assurance and certainty are expressed by this word (i:14).

Angels. Angels are prominently mentioned throughout Revelation. The exposition shows that the angel mentioned in viii:1-5; x:1 is the Lord Jesus Christ. Angels will be used in the end of the age to carry out the decreed judgments. On the angels of the different churches, the symbolical meaning, see the exposition chapter i:20.

The angels are the messengers who carried the Lord's message to the churches. They needed the power of the Spirit to do it. Hence the churches were to hear what the Spirit said to the churches (Rev. ii:7, etc.).

Antichrist, The. The final and personal Antichrist is mentioned for the first time in Revelation in chapter xiii:11-18. He is also called the false Prophet, because he heads up the ecclesiastical corruption and apostasy of the end of the age. He must not be confounded with the first Beast out of the Sea who is a political head, the emperor of the revived Roman empire, the little horn of Daniel vii, and the Prince that shall come of Dan. ix:26.

Antipas. An unknown faithful martyr in Pergamos, known to Christ ii:13, meaning one against all.

Apollyon. (ix:11.) The Greek name of Abaddon, the King over the Locust army. The name means Destruction or Destroyer.

Ark, The. (Chapter ix:19.) It is seen by John in the temple. It means symbolically the assured presence of Jehovah with His people Israel, the faithful remnant, in the trying times of Jacob's trouble.

Armageddon. Mentioned for the first time in the parenthesis between the sixth and seventh vial. (Chap. xvi:12-16). It means "The hill of slaughter." The battle of Armageddon will be of brief duration. It is the stone of Nebuchadnezzar's dream smiting suddenly the ten toes, the ten kingdoms (Dan. ii). The battle of Armageddon is briefly described in chapter xix:19-20.

Alleluia. "Praise ye the Lord." The four Hallelujahs are found in chapter xix:1-5.

Babylon. On the literal and mystical Babylon see exposition of chapter xvii. The literal Babylon will undoubtedly be restored as a city of influence. But the city mentioned in chapter xvii is not the literal Babylon, but Rome. Not only will the Roman empire be revived, *but* also papal Rome. Babylon the great, the mother of Harlots, will see a great revival. The system in its corruption is described in chapter xviii.

Balaam. The heathen Prophet who could not curse Israel, but put a stumbling-block before the children of Israel. Used in Revelation to describe the corruption in the professing church in giving up the divinely demanded separation from the world (chapter ii:14).

Beast, The. The expression "four Beasts in Rev. iv and v, etc., is faulty. The correct rendering is "the four living creatures" or the "four living ones." The term "Beast" applies to the revived Roman empire and its head, the little horn of Daniel, also called Beast in Daniel's vision. The Antichrist is likewise called a Beast. The work of the two Beasts is seen in chapter xiii.

Birds, unclean and hateful. Symbolical of evil persons outwardly professing to be something but full of corruption. They describe the apostate masses of Christendom. (Rev. xviii:2. Also Matt. xiii:31-32.)

Black Horse. The black horse comes into view with the opening of the third seal. Black is the color of night, darkness and death.

Blood, with Hail and Fire. (Chapter viii:7.) Not literal things, but symbols of divine judgment for this earth.

Bow, The. (Chapter vi:1.) The bow without an arrow as in possession by the rider upon the white horse is the symbol of a bloodless conquest.

Bride, The. (xxi:2.) The Bride of Christ, the Lamb's wife (xix:7); it is not Israel but the church.

Brimstone and Fire. The symbols of divine wrath (Isa. xxx:33).

Candlestick, Golden. Symbolical of that which gives light. Representing the seven assemblies. The church is on earth to give light.

Crowns. The symbols of given glory and also rewards for service. The crowns seen upon the seven heads of the

dragon (xii:3) and upon the four horns of the Beast (xiii:1) denote despotic authority.

David, Key of. Symbolical of the right to open and to enter in. See Isa. xxii:22. It is a prediction concerning Christ. The authority of the kingdom of heaven.

David, Root and Offspring. (xxii:17.) Christ is the Root and offspring of David.

Demons. Fallen spirit beings; the wicked spirits over which Satan is the head. They will be worshipped by the apostates during the end of the age. Demon-worship is even now going on to some extent, for the Antichristian cults are produced by demons (1 Tim. iv:1.) See Rev. ix:20-21. The word devils must be changed to demons. There is but one Devil, but legions of demons.

Dwellers on the Earth. This class mentioned repeatedly in Revelation are the large number of professing Christians, who did not receive the love of the truth and rejecting the Gospel follow the strong delusion and are utterly blinded, as well as hardened, during the tribulation.

Eagle. (viii:13.) The word angel must be changed to "eagle." Symbolical of the coming judgment, as an eagle is a bird of prey. Eagle's wings (xii:13-17) are symbolical of swift motion, escape and deliverance.

Earth. The prophetic territory of the Roman empire is mostly described by this form, though the entire earth is also indicated.

Earthquake. Symbolical of the shaking of all political and ecclesiastical institutions. But, as we show in our exposition, literal earthquakes will take place.

Elders, Twenty-four. The twenty-four elders typify all the redeemed in Glory. Old and New Testament Saints are included. After chapter xix this term does not appear again, because the church, the bride of Christ, is then seen

separate from the entire company of the redeemed, and takes her exalted position as the Lamb's wife.

Eternal State, The. The eternal state is described in chapter xxi:1-8.

Euphrates. This great river is mentioned twice in Revelation, ix:14 and xvi:12. It is the boundary line of the Roman empire and the land of Israel. See exposition of these passages.

Everlasting Gospel. (xiv:6.) The declaration of the Gospel of the Kingdom during the tribulation, and the proclamation of God as Creator to the heathen nations of the world, to prepare them for the gospel of the kingdom.

Fire. Often mentioned in this book and symbolical of the judgments which will be executed upon the earth as well as the everlasting wrath upon the unsaved.

Fornication. Spiritual wickedness in departing from the Truth of God, followed by the literal lusts of the flesh. The days of Lot will be on the earth before the Son of Man cometh.

Four. This number appears a number of times in Revelation. Four living creatures; four corners of the earth; four horns of the golden altar; four angels; four winds. Four is the number of universality.

Frogs. Mentioned between the sixth and seventh vial. Symbolical of demon influences, denoting filthy and wicked things. Frogs come out of slimy and dark waters; evil doctrines.

Glass, Sea of. (Chapter iv:6.) Compare with Exod. xxx:18-21 and 1 Kings vii:23, etc. Symbolical of fixed lasting holiness. No more water needed for cleansing from sin, for the Saints in Glory are delivered from the presence of sin itself.

God, Supper of. (Chapter xix:17.) Symbolical of God's judgment upon the wicked nations and the earth dwellers.

Gold. Symbolical of divine righteousness.

Grass. (vii:7.) Symbolical of human prosperity (Isa. xl:7 and 1 Peter i:24).

Hades. The region of disembodied spirits; literally "the unknown." Christ has the Keys. Hades with Death, because they came into existence through sin, will be cast into the Lake of fire.

Harvest of the Earth. The harvest is the end of the age. In chapter xiv:14-15 we read of the Lord's judgment dealing with the earth.

Hidden Manna. (ii:17.) Symbolical of the reward those who overcome will receive from the Lord.

Horns. Horn is symbolical of power. Horns mean typically kings, and powers and kingdoms (Dan. vii:24).

Image of the Beast. (xiii:12-15.) Compare with Dan. iii. It will be a literal image of the princely leader of the revived Roman empire, the first Beast, which John saw rising out of the sea.

Islands. Mentioned under the sixth seal and the seventh vial. Mountains typify kingdoms and governments; islands are symbolical of smaller and isolated governments. All will be affected. No doubt when the great earthquakes will shake the very foundations of the earth, many islands will also disappear.

Jasper. A precious stone, most likely our diamond. See exposition of chapter iv.

Jerusalem. The earthly and the heavenly Jerusalem are mentioned in the book. During the tribulation the earthly Jerusalem will be the seat of the Antichrist, the false Prophet. Jerusalem is for this reason called "Sodom and Egypt" (xi:8). Then Jerusalem will pass through her worst history. A great siege will take place at the close of the tribulation period and the city will fall (Zech. xiv).

After that Jerusalem will become the capital of the kingdom of Christ and a great temple will be erected, the universal place of worship during the millennium. The heavenly Jerusalem is above the earth. From there the glorious reign of Christ and the Saints will be executed. This glorious city will come down out of heaven at the end of the millennium to find its eternal resting-place on the new earth. (Chapter xxi-xxii.)

Jezebel. Symbolical of the Papacy. The corruptress which claims to be the Bride of Christ, but plays the harlot. See chapters ii and xvii.

Judgment. Judgment falls upon the earth during the seven years, which constitute the end of the age. When the Lord comes in His glory the great judgment of the nations takes place. Chapter xix:11, etc., compare with Matt. xxv:31. After the millennium the second resurrection takes place and the great white throne judgment is the judgment of the wicked dead.

King of the Nations. (xv:2-4.) King of the Saints should be changed (see margin) to King of the nations. Our Lord is the King of the nations, the King of kings.

Lake of Fire. The place which God has prepared for the Devil and his angels. The Beast and the false prophet will be cast there; also the Assyrian, the King of the North, the nations who followed the Beast and all the wicked dead. Death and Hades will likewise be put into that place.

The Lamb. The Lamb (John i:29), our Lord in His sacrificial character, is mentioned twenty-eight times in Revelation. The Lamb is worshipped by all. Thus we find the Song of the Lamb, the Throne of the Lamb and the Marriage of the Lamb, and the Wife of the Lamb (the church) in this book.

Lightning. Symbolical of the divine judgment Wrath.

Locust Army. Symbolical of the host of demons, which come out of the abyss to torment mankind.

Lord's Day, The. Mentioned but once in i:10. It is the first day of the week on which John saw the great Patmos vision.

Man-child. (Chapter xii.) The Man-child is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark of the Beast. Some special mark which declares ownership. As the Holy Spirit seals those who trust on Christ, so Antichrist will put his mark upon those who follow him.

Millennium, The. Millennium means "a thousand years." Six times this period of blessing and glory is mentioned in Rev. xx.

Moon as blood. The Moon is symbolical of derived authority. Blood is the symbol of death. Apostate Israel and the apostate church passing through the most severe judgments are symbolized by this figure.

Morning Star, The. Christ in His Coming for the church. (Chapters xxii:16; ii:28).

Mountain. A kingdom.

Mountains, Seven. Rome is the city built upon the seven hills. See exposition of chapter xvii.

Nicolaitanes. Mentioned in the message of Ephesus and Pergamos. They signify the domineering, priestly class which assumed an unscriptural place of authority in the church.

Palms. Emblems of victory.

Rainbow. The symbol of covenant and of mercy. Mentioned twice. Around the Throne (chapter iv) and around His head (chapter x).

Rest of the Dead. (xx:5.) Meaning those who had not part in the First Resurrection, hence the wicked dead.

River of Life. (xxii:1.) Symbolical of the fullness of life, glory and blessing.

Saints. The Saints in Revelation include all the Saints. The Old and New Testament Saints are seen under the figure of the twenty-four elders. The suffering Saints are the Jewish Saints and the remnant of Israel, as well as the multitude of nations, who accept the final message and come out of the great tribulation (Chapter vii).

Satan. The entire book reveals his person, his work and his destiny. His work may be traced in the church-messages. Then we have his work during the tribulation and his final work after the millennium.

Scorpions. Symbolical of the torment caused by the army of demons under the fifth trumpet judgment.

Sea. Symbol of the nations. Also the literal sea, which gives up the dead. Then there will be no more sea. All wickedness and restlessness will cease forever.

Seven. The divine number. No other Book in the Bible contains so many "sevens" as this final Bible-book, the Revelation. There are seven angels, churches, attributes of the Lord, heads, horns, eyes, spirits, lamps, seals, trumpets, vials, plagues, stars, thunders, times and a sevenfold doxology.

Song. The songs of the Redeemed and the Song of Moses and the Lamb are mentioned in the Book.

Stars. See exposition on the meaning of the seven stars in His hand. Stars are also symbolical of lesser authorities, which will all fall during the tribulation period. Lights in the night.

Sun. The symbol of supreme authority.

Synagogue of Satan. Mentioned in the messages to Smyrna and Philadelphia. It means a Judaized Christianity as seen in Ritualistic, professing Christendom.

Temple. The tribulation temple is in view in chapter xi:1-3. The millennial temple is seen in vii:15. Then there is the temple in heaven (chapter xvi:17). In the heavenly Jerusalem there is no temple (xxi:22).

Third Part. Mentioned in connection with men, the sea, the stars of heaven, the Sun and the Moon. It probably refers exclusively to the Roman empire, which in its different aspects and authorities, will be affected during these judgments.

Two horns. The Beast out of the land has two horns like a lamb, but speaks like the dragon. He is the counterfeit Christ.

Waters, Many. Symbolical of peoples and nations over which the Romish whore has authority.

White. Color of righteousness and purity; also denoting victorious conquests. We have in Revelation, white Robes, the white horses, white linen, a white cloud and a white Throne.

Witnesses. See in Rev. xi about the two witnesses.

Wrath. We read of the Wrath of God and the wrath of the Lamb. The wrath of God is completed with the pouring out of the vials. The wrath of the Lamb will be executed when He comes in Glory.

Zion. Mentioned only once in Rev., chapter xiv:1. It means the literal Zion in Palestine. Upon that holy hill of Zion the glory will rest during the millennium. See Psalm cxxxii:13-14.

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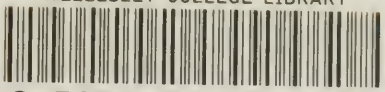

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